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HISTORY OF
THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT
IN INDIA

VOLUME THREE

HISTORY OF THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT IN INDIA

VOLUME THREE

BY

TARA CHAND

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PREFACE

The first two volumes of the *History of the Freedom Movement in India* were concerned with the preparation of the ground for the emergence of the concept of nationalism and freedom. The marked geographical unity of India provided the necessary condition for the development of the consciousness of the community of the peoples living within the geographical boundaries of the country. Although there were religious diversities and cultural divergencies among them, their similarities were so striking that Babur was constrained to admit the common ways of living of the inhabitants.

During the period covered in the third volume the consciousness of unity developed into the political awareness of a common destiny. The British rulers were alarmed at this development. Their imperial interests demanded refusal to the recognition of India's claim to nationhood. Till almost the end of the imperialist pretensions and as a consequence of the Second World War, the recession of imperialist claims of the European states and the replacement of the influence of the competing European nations by the two super powers, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., the leading statesmen of Britain continued to deny the possibility of self-determination to the countries under their yoke.

The problem of identity and of difference among the inhabitants of India and the other peoples arose in the last moiety of the 18th century, after the British had conquered Bengal and established the administration which made a distinction between the white rulers and their brown subjects. The rulers assumed superior authority, monopolised higher posts and excluded the subjects from the exercise of policy-making rights and all positions of influence.

The conquered bemoaned their inferiority in
and began devising plans to recover equality with

querors. Among the conquered two schools of thought arose. One advocated the use of force to get rid of the foreign rulers: among them were several groups—revivalists, revolutionaries, terrorists and others. The other school believed in methods of peaceful agitation, of exercising political pressure, of organised opposition.

These schools occupied the stage till the end of the First World War and the inauguration of Gandhiji's movement of Non-violent Non-cooperation. The movement grew in intensity and acquired unprecedented popularity. It became a powerful instrument of enforcing people's will. The British were convinced that as a result of the losses suffered during the Second World War they were no longer capable of maintaining their empire over the unwilling subjects.

The Third Volume deals with the spread of nationalist ideas and growth of the urge for self-determination. These ideas were propagated through new interpretations of philosophies and religions, both Hindu and Muslim. The object of the interpreters was to rouse the passion for freedom, but the appeal was made through the texts of the ancient sacred literatures.

Though both Hindu and Muslim exegesists had similar aims, they wrote in language familiar to one group, but incomprehensible to the other. This lack of understanding was profitable to the rulers and they exerted their influence to widen the differences. As wielders of power and apprehensive of losing their empire they were loath to believe that Indians possessed the requisite unity and capacity to sustain a united and well-administered India.

In writing the Third Volume I received much help from my research officers, especially Dr. R.K. Parmu and Dr. V.G. Dighe. The manuscript was typed by Shri B.R. Ajmani. The officials of the National Archives of India placed the resources of the Archives freely at my disposal, which I am grateful.

15, 1972 **TARA CHAND**

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CHAPTER ONE

THE STATE OF ENGLAND AND THE ECLIPSE OF IMPERIALISM

I. INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the twentieth century India's demand for responsible government was acquiring urgency, but it met with opposition from all the three political parties in Great Britain. History, however, could not stand still as the confrontation between Britain and India carried within it seeds of tension and conflict. Obstinate dissent, on the one side hardened; recalcitrance, on the other, created friction which grew with the passage of time.

On the Indian side, dynamic changes were taking place in the different strata of society. Among the various sections of the people, the affluent land-owner and the princely order were still loyal to the Government but the businessmen, the professional groups and the intelligentsia were showing signs of disillusionment and dissatisfaction. They were instinctively turning to the 'inert', depressed and discontented masses or support in their struggle for change. Some of the more forceful leaders had already realized the futility of what was called 'constitutional agitation', and advocated vigorous mass action. As the century advanced, their numbers and influence increased and their organisational activities acquired greater momentum, zest and aggressiveness.

On the other side, the position of unparalleled economic prosperity and unrivalled primacy in international politics which Britain had attained began to be challenged and then gradually to regress as other nations advanced in industry, wealth and power and left Britain behind. The rise of the nations with greater human and natural resources, not only stretched Britain's energies to the uttermost in the economic competition, but also rendered the maintenance of the empire in a world of powerful rivals a tremendously risky affair. Imperialism with its monopolistic tendency necessarily provoked jealousies which involved severe strains on both manpower and economy. An empire is a doubtful asset in the absence of world supremacy. Britain lost its hegemony early in the twentieth century, but only gradually realized the implications of the loss.

The struggle for independence was thus an argument between two parties—one advancing with growing impatience and resolution towards its chosen goal and the other weakening in the conviction of its imperial mission, but yielding its position reluctantly under the pressure of the emerging forces in the world.

The loss of its world position by Britain was not due to factors which had brought about the downfall of the empires in the past, *e.g.*, the Achaemenian of Iran, the Athenian and Macedonian of Greece, the Roman of Italy, the Caliphate of Islam, and the Holy Roman Empire of the Middle Ages of Europe. There was no apparent loss of the morale of the people, no diminution of patriotic fervour, no stasis. There were no signs of violent class conflict or collapse of social order, and no decline in intellectual energy, scientific and technical inventiveness, or capacity for adaptability and enterprise. The explanation seems to be two-fold—internally Britain's limitations of manpower and natural resources, and externally the development of her competitors with much larger populations and natural advantages which were exploited with increasing speed in the twentieth century. These handicaps were really insuperable, and obliged Britain to slide down eventually to a second rank in the comity of nations.

But the change was not sudden and was spread over several decades. Although the realization of the significance of the change came gradually, it manifested itself with increasing clarity as the decades passed witnessing the deterioration of Britain's position in the world and the dissolution of the bonds of Empire.

II. THE EMPIRE AT THE OPENING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

In the closing years of the previous century the British Empire stood at the height of its power and prestige. It occupied thirteen million square miles of the earth's area and ruled over 370 million people, of whom over 300 million were inhabitants of India. The British flag flew over territories scattered over all the continents of the earth. It excelled all the other imperial nations—France, Germany, Russia, Belgium, Holland, Portugal and USA in the extent of dominion and the number of subjects.

The principal bases of its power were two—its navy and its economy. The British navy was the most powerful sea-going force, Britannia indeed ruled the waves. Near the end of the century Lord Spencer had rebuilt the navy and provided it with heavier warships, with newly designed destroyers together with improved longer-range and larger-bore guns and other armaments. Fisher completed the process by the reorganisation of the naval commands, building new heavy and powerful battleships with all big guns, cruisers as auxiliaries, and wide-ranging submarines. Thus a mighty fleet was created which afforded adequate protection to the far-flung imperial domains and inhibited encroachments from the rivals.

Britain's prominence in world economy was unquestioned. Its wealth during the last decade was still growing fast, although the rate was not as high as in the earlier decades. The national income was rising and the wages of labour were growing faster than the prices. The real wages in 1900 were 77 per cent higher than those in 1860. Britain was still the 'workshop of the world', though competitors protected by tariff walls were rapidly forging ahead and disputing the lead. The resulting setback to British industry in its traditional manufactures was, however, compensated by expansion in the manufacture of machinery and ships, and production of iron, steel and coal.

Its merchant marine still carried the largest tonnage of merchandise in the world. More than 70 per cent of the foreign trade of the United Kingdom entering into and clearing from British ports was carried in British ships, five-eighths of the world's steamer tonnage was provided by Britain, more than half the world's ocean-going cargo used British shipping and more than 60 per cent of the world's new tonnage was launched from her dockyards. Foreign trade was riding on the crest of a wave since 1894, both imports and exports were expanding.

In finance, London was the centre of the world. British investments in 1900, both at home and abroad, were growing. The total net investment in 1900 was £ 226.3 million, which was higher than the investment in any previous year. It was about 12.5 per cent of the net national income. It is interesting that in 1913, the last year before the war, it had reached the figure of £372.2 million and 15.3 per cent of the total income. These years mark another trend in economic development. The investments in domestic economy diminished and in foreign countries grew in volume. Between 1900 and 1913 the fall in domestic investment is from £188.4 million to £147.9 million or from 10.4 per cent of the national product to 6.1 per cent; but the rise in foreign investment is from £37.9 million to £224.3 million or from 2.1 per cent of the total income to 6.1 per cent.[1] Evidently British capital was finding it more profitable to finance foreign development than to stay at home to promote indigenous industry.

Considerable advantages accrued from these investments. For the opportunities of utilization of the accumulated capital in foreign countries, and more especially in underdeveloped regions of Africa, Asia and South America, brought greater profits. Strachey points out: "Throughout the first decade of the twentieth century the standard of living failed to rise: the economy as a whole, and with it the gross national product, were growing steadily: evergrowing annual surpluses resulted: where could these surpluses find profitable employment except abroad?"[2]

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[1] Ashworth, W., *An Economic History of England, 1870-1939*, p. 139 table X.

Foreign investment stimulated production of a wider range of commodities at less cost, enabled Britain to obtain imports needed for its manufactures at cheaper rates and spurred the development of new markets. Says Ashworth, "Closely associated with this change was the relatively as well as absolutely greater share which the provision of distributive, financial and other services had among British economic activities. The growth of financial services, in particular, helped to foster the expansion and prosperity of a world-wide multilateral trading system, on which Britain's livelihood had come to depend, and to give Britain a central position of outstanding strength and influence within it."[3]

Along with the export of funds, the exports of commodities also grew. In 1900, they were worth £282 million and in 1910, £430 million. This was accounted for mainly by iron and steel, machinery and ship-building.

But not only foreign trade was affected, all trade showed progress. In 1901, the figure was £870.5 million, in 1913 £1,155.7 million (in 1901 prices). Again, there was an increase in the real capital of the country of the order of 50 per cent between 1895 and 1914.

Along with this picture of prosperity has to be placed the other side. Prices were rising in the pre-war years, the index of wholesale prices which was 72 in 1901 (with 1871-100) moved up to 85 in 1913. But wages remained almost stationary, the index being 133 in 1901-5 (for 1888-100) and 134 in 1913. Unemployment had increased from 5.2 per cent in 1891-1900 to 6 per cent in 1901-10.

At the end of the nineteenth century, then, Britain stood on the pinnacle of prosperity and power. Its population was growing, its standards of living and levels of economic comfort were rising, its foreign trade was expanding, its industry was successfully adapting itself to the changing situation in the world, its national income and savings were moving upwards and it had become the great banker and financier of the nations.

III. Britain on the Eve of the First World War

But already threatening clouds were gathering on the horizon and casting their dark shadows on the brilliant scene of the economic miracle that was England. Britain's rivals were advancing fast. In population in the first decade of the twentieth century the growth in Britain was from 41.9 million to 45.3 million, that is, 8 per cent, that in Germany from 56.3 million to 64.9 million or 15 per cent and in the USA from 75.9 million to 91.7 million or 21 per cent.

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[2] Strachey, J., *The End of Empire*, p. 116.

[3] Ashworth, W., *op. cit.*, p. 254.

During the period of twenty years (1893-1913) before the Great War the percentage increase in population, coal production, pig iron, crude steel, and exports of manufactures, the progress made by Germany and the United States outdistanced that of Britain by a large margin, as the following table shows:[4]

INCREASE PER CENT (1893-1913)

	United Kingdom	Germany	USA
1. Population	20	32	46
2. Coal Production	75	159	210
3. Pig Iron	50	287	337
4. Crude Steel	136	522	715
5. Exports of Manufactures	121	239	563

The growth of real income per head which was growing during the last quarter of the nineteenth century at a high rate—between 17 and 25 per cent according to different calculations, made a poor showing in the decade 1905-14, for it rose by 7 per cent only above the immediately preceding decade. The slow growth of national income reflected the stationary state of the income of the workers, at the same time that the gross national product was steadily improving, resulting in ever growing annual surpluses, which found profitable investment abroad and stoked the fires of imperialist expansion, and inter-imperialist rivalry.

The export of British capital abroad and increasing profits from the foreign investments failed to have much effect upon the general level of living of the British wage earner. In fact the investing classes—the bourgeoisie, reaped most of the profits and became richer, while the wages of the workers remained at a standstill during the first decade of the twentieth century. If the investor's interests provided the impetus to the resurgence of imperialism during the years before the First World War, the relative poverty of the labourers stimulated the growth of working class movement and socialist opinion.

The surveys of Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree revealed the large percentage of families receiving inadequate incomes and the squalid condition of their living. According to them more than 30 per cent of the population of London and nearly 28 per cent of York were living in poverty.

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[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 240 and 243.

The tendency of the economy affecting the higher and lower strata of society was summed up by Myrdal in the words of the Bible: "For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."[5]

The British capitalists became alarmed at the threat of foreign competition and the unrest among workers, and began to seriously devise plans to meet the situation. The main industries which were hard hit were iron and steel, metals and cotton textiles of Lancashire. Joseph Chamberlain of Birmingham who was directly concerned in the industry of Midlands and Lancashire, became the leader of the movement to fight against Britain's rivals and improve the condition of labour. As protection had helped USA and Germany to build up their industries, he came to the conclusion that the policy of free trade needed to be scrapped in favour of protection and that the British Empire should be used to extend markets for British manufactured goods by the policy of imperial preference. At the same time steps were to be taken for improving the lot of the workers.

The economic situation in Britain on the eve of the World War was thus paradoxical. The country enjoyed an enviable prosperity among the nations of the world, and wielded immense power and prestige in international affairs. On the other hand, while British economy was showing signs of slowing down, the economy of its rivals was advancing fast and attempting to overtake and surpass it. At home social and political cleavages were widening, affecting the relations of capital and labour and of government and opposition. Questions like women's sufferage, Irish Home Rule, workman's wages, and others were causing widespread unrest and violent clashes.

The social situation which confronted the British Government at the opening of the twentieth century was sufficiently serious to cause anxiety. The people were reacting vigorously against the smug complacency, enervating self-satisfaction and imperialistic pride of the ruling class. What makes these years so remarkable "is the seething and teeming of this pre-war period, its immense ferment and its restless fertility", betokening a revolution which matured in the succeeding decades.

IV. THE RESURGENCE OF IMPERIALISM

To this ferment, Britain owed the awakening of the conscience of the rulers to the need of mitigating the deplorable state of workmen, and of saving "the 40,000,000 inhabitants of the United Kingdom from a bloody civil war", by acquiring new lands to settle the surplus population, and providing new markets for the goods produced in the factories and mines. As Cecil Rhodes put it, "The Empire, as I have always said, is a bread and butter question. If you want to avoid civil war, you must become imperialists."[6]

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[5] Cited in Strachey, J., *op.cit.*, p. 115

Imperialist expansion and social betterment became the twin objects of most of the British politicians and leaders of industry. They readily responded to the demands for the expansion of industrial establishments in order to meet the growing requirements of the consumers—the masses; and more zealously, and even at some sacrifice in regard to internal investment, to the desire for increasing investment of capital abroad, which brought greater profits, but also involved territorial expansion, exploitation of backward people and aggravation of competition and rivalry among nations.

But although the need of conciliating the working classes was recognised—for instance, Joseph Chamberlam thought that democracy wanted two things; imperialism and social reform; action, commensurate with the expectation of these classes, lagged behind. It is true that their condition, contrary to what had been expected, did not deteriorate, still the improvement was not satisfactory, because relatively to the growing affluence of the rich it was undoubtedly unimpressive.

Joseph Chamberlain and the Tariff Reformers, impressed by the Bismarckian experiment in state socialism in Germany, sought to strengthen the imperialist sentiment at home and imperialist influence abroad, by stimulating higher production through measures of protection, reinforcing the bonds of the empire through imperial preference, and rousing patriotic feeling and exciting pride in the glories of imperial power among the masses. It was necessary to obtain the acquiescence of the workers to some of the disadvantages of protection pointed out by free traders, *e.g.*, higher cost of food, by promising augmentation of national wealth, higher wages and social ameliorative measures, like old-age pensions.

Chamberlain's views were widely propagated. Even the Liberals of the first quarter of the twentieth century were divided into imperialists and anti-imperialists. The first were led by Rosebery, Grey, Haldane and Asquith. Among the latter were William Harcourt, Campbell-Bannerman and Lloyd George. Churchill, the son of a conservative father, opposed the imperial policies of Chamberlain and joined the Liberal government in 1905 as the President of the Board of Trade in company with Grey who held the portfolio of Foreign Affairs; the one promoted social reform, the other the increase of armaments.

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[6] Lenin, N., *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (New York, 1939), p. 79.

V. POLITICAL PARTIES AND IMPERIALISM

The Chamberlain ideas and programme permeated British politics, but different parties reacted to them in different ways. All the three political parties contained advocates of imperialism, some mild and some vigorous, some laying greater emphasis on the domestic side of the Chamberlain programme, others on its foreign aspects. But all attempted to combine the two, although in different proportions. At the same time the Cobden school of anti-imperialists was not by any means extinct, and free trade was not entirely abandoned till after the World War.

The Conservatives, the inheritors of Disraeli tradition, were the strongest upholders of imperialism. They had won the so-called 'khakhi' election of 1900. Joseph Chamberlain, the one-time Radical, had become a convert to what may be named "mercantilism redivivus", national power expressed in imperial and international affairs, in social amelioration and economic development. In 1903 he launched his campaign for tariff reform, imperial preference, and social reform—the reform which would secure for the masses of the industrial population of Britain constant employment at fair wages, the reform which would wean the working classes away from socialism and rally them in the defence of the empire. In that year the Tariff Reform League was founded, which attracted many Conservative members of the party in Parliament, although some remained on the fence and some stuck to free trade. But all were united on the international and imperial policies of the Party, although the outlook of the older Tories like Salisbury and Hicksbeach was somewhat different from that of the younger ones, for instance, Curzon, Lyttleton, Arthur Balfour, Brodrick and Wyndham.

Among the most enthusiastic zealots of imperialism whose ideas appealed to the politicians was Milner, the British proconsul in South Africa. As a liberal in his youth he found a sympathetic response among the young liberals and as an imperialist with a high conception of the Empire's mission he enthused the young Tories. His imperialist gospel was spread by sociologists, scientists, geographers, historians and poets who looked upon the empire as "the greatest business organisation in the world", which if properly and efficiently developed could greatly strengthen British economy. They believed that the British were "the greatest of governing races the world had ever seen", "predestined by our defects as well as our virtues to spread over the habitable globe".[7]

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[7] *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, Vol. III, p. 347. (Quotation from Joseph Chamberlain's speeches)

In the Labour Party—a combination of the socialists, the independent Labour Party and the Trade Unionists, there were several strands of thought. Some were anti-imperialist Little Englanders who were keen to wind up the empire and make the dominions autonomous. A second section considered, like the Liberals, the empire as a trust which history had imposed upon them, because its components were unable to maintain conditions of peace and human progress by their own efforts. A third group justified imperialism as an instrument for the maintenance of standards of living of wage-earners at home.

The Labour Party had little influence on Parliamentary affairs till 1906. But in the elections of that year their strength had increased to 29, and Ramsay MacDonald was elected Chairman in 1911. During the war, in recognition of the importance of labour, Henderson served as a member of the Cabinet (1915-17). But during the period of the war the Labour members were more or less ancillaries of the Liberal Party.

On the Indian question the Party was not of one mind. Though the majority of the Socialists was opposed to imperialism and militarism and favoured internationalism and free trade, there were a number of socialist leaders and writers who accepted the ideals of nationalism and imperialism. Among them prominent were some of the leaders of the Fabian Society. They advocated socialist solutions of the domestic problems—nationalisation of industries, equal distribution of national wealth, and so on. But in regard to foreign policy they took up a stand similar to that of the Liberal Imperialists of the Rosebery School.

Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Bernard Shaw and Wells were the most prominent leaders of the imperialist group in the Society. The Fabians held that backward and inefficient people must not be allowed to hinder the progress of civilization. They desired to see the Empire as "a powerful and self-conscious force", planned energetically for the exploitation of resources and united more closely as trustees for British standards in the common interests "not only of the whole British Commonwealth, but of the whole of civilized society. They were impatient of native rights which might obstruct progress; the bigger the unit, the greater its efficiency".[8] About the Webbs, Halevy wrote: "Convinced imperialists and looking to a national and militarist state to realize their programme of moderate collectivism, they had never felt anything but contempt for every formula of Liberalism and free trade."[9] Bernard Shaw in a speech at Clifford Inn Hall claimed that "a Fabian must necessarily be an imperialist". In his opinion the small nations were anachronistic in the new world, and "a Great Power consciously or unconsciously, must govern in the interests of civilization as a whole".[10] On this issue Shaw fought against the anti-imperialists in both the referendum of the Party and the election to the Executive and won a thumping victory. He drafted the pamphlet *Fabianism and the Empire* which became the authoritative expression of the Fabian Society. In McBriar's opinion, "the views expressed in *Fabianism and the Empire* do range the Fabians on the Imperialist side, and not on the opposite side. . . .The Fabians apparently regarded it as justifiable for a country of higher civilization to take over 'backward' countries".[11] The Fabians did not think India was ready for Parliamentary institutions; but they favoured the development of educational facilities, the Indianization of the Civil Services in increasing stages, the multiplication of legislative councils with limited powers, and a wise development of the self-government inherent in the village councils.[12]

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[8] *Cambridge History of the British Empire*, Vol. III, p. 349.

[9] Halevy, E., *A History of the British People*, Vol. III, p. 365.

Webb adopted the Liberal creed of 'efficiency' too. He wanted virility in government; a cry in which Joseph Chamberlain and his party joined. Thus, with the cooperation of the Liberal Imperialists—Grey and Haldane, and the sympathy of the Conservative leader, Arthur Balfour, a new party known as the Coefficients, was launched in 1902 to bring together a group of talented men with 'common faith' and 'common purpose', namely, the elaboration of the aims and methods of Imperial policy. Leopold Amery who later became the Secretary of State of India (1940-45) was one of the group. Another was Theodore Morison who played an important role in Indian politics as principal of the M.A.O. College, Aligarh. The other prominent members were Mackinder the geographer, Hewins the Director of the London School of Economics, Bertrand Russell the philosopher, Col. Wedgwood member of Parliament, H.G. Wells the writer, and Milner the proconsul.

The socialist Imperialists were opposed by anti-Imperialists like Ramsay MacDonald and Barnes. H.G. Wells turned to social reform and championship of efficiency. In his books *Anticipation* (1901), *Mankind in the Making* (1903), and *Modern Utopia* (1905), he discussed the problems of society and individual in order to indicate how to create the ideal citizen.

VI. The Liberals and the Conservatives

In 1906 the Liberals came into power, and when the War broke out they were the senior partners in government. On the aims of imperialism, the Party was divided. The old guard consisting of Campbell-Bannerman, Harcourt, Morley were attached to the Cobdenite principles: the younger generation which had imbibed the doctrines of Hegelian dialectic—the thesis and the anti-thesis of the West and the East, as propounded by Green and Bosanquet followed the liberal imperialism of Rosebery. Prominent among them were Grey, Asquith and Haldane.

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[10] McBriar, B. M., *Fabian Socialism and English Politics*, 1884-1918, p. 124.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 126.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 129.

They differed from the Tory Imperialists because they believed in free trade and repudiated protection. Rosebery advocated the imperialist idea for, according to him, the Empire "offers a variety of guarantees and opportunities to her workers, the working men of all classes, which can be offered by no other country in the world". For the Liberals the Empire was an indispensable instrument of social reform and, therefore, well worth living as well as dying for. But they recognised "that Britain's attitude towards the overseas responsibilities is not the assertion of power, but the administration of a trust".[13]

In order to achieve these aims the first condition was the rearing "of an imperial race—a race, vigorous, industrious and intrepid". This required the introduction of social measures of health, education and higher standards of living. It was only through efficient government that the Empire's resources could be developed and exploited in the interests of the British people.

The idea of efficiency became the watchword of the Liberals, and under Rosebery's chairmanship the Liberal League was established to promote national fitness in all departments of national life. The idea became popular and both the Conservatives and the Socialists adopted it.

During the war the concept of Empire became modified after reaching its high tide in the first decade of the century.

The Empire was, however, divided into two parts—the white empire and the non-white empire. The white one was inhabited by the kith and kin of the white races of Europe. It was a free empire which claimed equality of status with the metropolitan state. Britain sought to retain their allegiance by dangling before them the prizes of imperial preference and equality of status in a federal structure. But the dominions did not succumb to the temptations. They desired unfettered discretion to protect their nascent industries even against the mother country. The federal ideal did not appeal to them. The three British parties had no radical differences concerning British policy towards the white empire.

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[13] Phillips, H., *The Liberal Outlook*, p. 187.

VII. THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY AND INDIA

But the situation concerning the non-white empire was different. The non-whites, among whom the inhabitants of India constituted the majority of about 80 per cent, consisted of the "lesser breed without the law". They were the ones to be exploited in the interests of the chosen people—the English. Curzon, the great imperialist proconsul and spokesman of the Conservative Party, proclaimed :

"It will be well for England, better for India, and best of all for the progressive civilization in general, if it be clearly understood from the outset that . . . we have not the slightest intention of abandoning our Indian possessions and that it is highly improbable that any such intention will be entertained by our posterity."

After his recall from India he made a speech at a dinner given in his honour by the London Society of Pilgrims under the presidentship of Lord Roberts on April 6, 1906. In responding to the toast proposed by Lord George Hamilton, the ex-Viceroy of India remarked: "They (the Indians) are not one community, one language, one race, or one religion; they are a continent, an Empire, almost a universe apart."[14]

He added, "We feel that our experience in India, whatever it may have been, is something with which we could not part for anything else the world has to offer, that we have had our hand, so to speak, on one pulse of a universe, and have played a part, however humble, in the greatest work that can be given to human beings to perform."[15]

In another post-prandial oration in honour of Lord Milner on May 24, 1906, Curzon asserted: "The voyage which our predecessors commenced we have to continue, we have to answer our helm, and it is an imperialist helm, down all the tides of time."[16]

Curzon repeated what Joseph Chamberlain had declared twelve years earlier: We "would never lose the hold we now have over our great Indian dependency—by far the greatest and most valuable of all the customers we have".[17]

The Liberal Party, from which some Indian leaders like Gokhale expected a great deal, swore by the principle of trusteeship. The British rulers were not merely the guardians of peace and order; they were divinely commissioned to protect the interests of the illiterate and backward masses. In 1906 John Morley, the radical thinker whom the Labour Party considered a suitable spokesman of their opinions and educated Indians as their political preceptor, became the Secretary of State for India. Hopes rose high. What could be more favourable for the Indian cause than to have at the head of Government a sympathetic narrator of the lives of the French Revolutionaries, a friendly biographer of a liberal statesman like Gladstone and anti-imperialist thinkers like Burke and Cobden, a supporter of home rule for Ireland and an opponent of the war against the Boers of South Africa? But Morley the radical was at the same time the supporter of the principle of trusteeship. He told Minto that he was sceptical about the introduction of English political institutions in India.[18]

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[14] Curzon, First Marquis, *Subjects of the Day*, p. 27.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[17] Chamberlain, J., Speech on June 22, 1894, *vide* Dobb, M., *Studies in the Development of Capitalism*, p. 311, note 2.

In 1909, he affirmed in a speech in the House of Lords that the intention of the Reform Act was to persuade those who hoped for autonomy or self-government of the colonial species or pattern in India to give up their dream and be content with admission to cooperation with the British administration.[19]

In 1912, the liberal Secretary of State, Crewe, assured the House of Lords that the apprehensions of Curzon and Lansdowne about the introduction of federal home rule in India were baseless, as Government had no such intention.[20]

The outbreak of the World War in 1914, however, led to some rethinking about the future of India. In 1914, Asquith, the Liberal Prime Minister, and the Under Secretary, Roberts, confessed, "Henceforth Indian questions would have to be approached from a different angle of vision."[21]

Edwin Montagu, the young Asquithian liberal who became dissatisfied with his leader, joined the faction of Lloyd George. On July 12, he made a vitriolic attack on the report of the Mesopotamian operations conducted by the Government of India. But he made it clear that he was definitely of the view that Home Rule for India was not possible. He wrote, "Before that goal is reached, many years, and indeed many generations, will have been spent, and different parts of India can be treated at a different speed."[22]

The principles were accepted both by Lloyd George, the Liberal Prime Minister, as well as his Conservative cabinet colleagues. Austen Chamberlain gave his blessings. How could any British party object to such an innocent undertaking as the "exploration" of the working of government, or the statement of the "ultimate" end of British rule in India which may take many generations to reach?

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[18] Morley, J., *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 172.

[19] *H. L. Debates*, 5th Series, Vol. 11, cols. 118-19.

[20] *Ibid.*, cols. 243-44.

[21] *H. C. Debates*, 5th Series, Vol. 68, col. 1357.

[22] Waley, S. D., *Edwin Montagu*, p. 131.

Even then Curzon who as a member of the Cabinet had agreed, remained sceptical. "Why is it necessary," he asked Montagu, "to proceed at breakneck speed in a case that constitutes a revolution of which not one person in a thousand in this country realises the magnitude, and which will probably lead by stages of increasing speed to the ultimate disruption of the Empire?"[23]

Curzon, however, allowed himself to be persuaded, and in spite of the opposition of some members of the House of Lords, "who seemed to think that the world has not moved during the past twenty years and that the Government of India is something which is intended to endure for all time without any change or modification", the Government of India Act 1919 was placed on the Statute Book.

But the labours of Montagu proved fruitless. The effects of the constitutional change were completely negatived by the repressive policies which inspired the enactment of the Rowlatt Act and the measures of frightful suppression culminating in the massacre of Amritsar on April 13, 1919. The terrorism let loose by Government and the humiliations inflicted upon the people were bound to inflame angry passions. The Muslims were specially resentful at the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the threatened division of their holy lands among the Christian victors of the Caliph's Arab dominions. In these conditions cooperation between the people and the government was a vain hope.

The Liberal contribution to the solution of the Indian problem was foredoomed to failure. The Nationalists condemned it as unsatisfactory and the Moderates showed little enthusiasm. The gulf between the demands of the Indian leaders and the response of the British Government showed no signs of narrowing. Taylor has pointed out the niggardliness of the constitutional advance in the words: "New constitutions were devised for the provinces, fancy names, many elections, but no transfer of power, mere pictures of still life offered to a hungry man. The Viceroy still ruled as a despot, the India Office in London still wielded final authority."[24]

VIII. The Consequences of the War

The war came to an end on November 11, 1918, when the armistice was signed. Prolonged negotiations followed and the Treaty of Versailles with its harsh provisions imposed on the defeated powers inaugurated a new epoch of increasing tensions, clash of interests, and political revolutions.

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[23] *Ibid.*, *p.* 173 quotes Curzon's letter to Montagu, July 23, 1918.

[24] Taylor, A. J. P., *Oxford English History*, 1914-45, p. 152.

Immediately, though the British economy was shaken, it was not shattered. England emerged wounded but in better shape than its allies—France and Russia, and its enemies—Germany and Italy.

Nevertheless, the period was one of missed opportunities at home and setbacks abroad, of growing class conflict, strikes, rising unemployment and waning confidence and increasing disillusionment, "a breathing space between two times of troubles".

The war affected the economy of Britain in two principal ways. In the first place, its industry which was geared to the purposes of war had to be reorganised for peace. Then its production, especially in the two main branches, textiles and coal, was seriously reduced and the loss had to be replaced. This was done to a considerable extent by the rise of the new industries like electric goods, aeroplanes, automobiles and chemicals. The considerable fall in the prices of food and raw materials, together with a comparatively smaller fall in the prices of manufactured goods also helped industry and labour. The destruction in the shipping and capital assets was soon repaired.

In the second place, the war had completely disorganised the world economy. The international financial system was out of gear. The foreign exchanges were in a chaotic condition. British savings and earnings of international surplus had diminished. Britain whose prosperity depended upon foreign trade lost many of its foreign markets. Some of the countries with which it used to trade extensively were in turmoil, some had built up their own industries and reduced imports from Britain. Then new independent states had come into existence whose policies obstructed the flow of trade. The USA and Japan having escaped the worst ravages of the war had utilized their opportunities to move forward in the race for industrialization, and became formidable competitors.

Thus in 1918, the value of the British exports (including re-exports) was 63 per cent below that of 1913, and of imports 27 per cent. On the other hand, the foreign trade of USA increased by 20 per cent and that of Japan by 75 per cent during the same period.

As years passed, these tendencies were accentuated. Britain's share of the world's exports declined from 13 per cent in 1913 to 12 per cent in 1929. She transferred 30 per cent of her production to foreign trade in 1913 and 27 per cent in 1929. The total value of her production was reduced by 16 per cent in these years.

Foreign trade was also affected by the growth of autarky in the national economies of the continental countries. The problems of war indemnities and of repayment and recovery of loans to foreign governments had also adverse effects. In consequence British exports declined. The coal exports declined from 82 million tons (1903) to 70 million tons (1930), and the textiles fell down from 105 million to 86 million. The investment of capital abroad had also become less profitable. The business of short term finance declined, and of long term loans fell sharply.

1913	£177 million
1930	£120 ,,

The recession in production had an adverse effect upon employment. From about 6 per cent in the pre-war years unemployment shot up to 16.2 per cent in 1921 and averaged 12 per cent or over a million from 1922 to 1929. In services like shipping, insurance and capital, Britain had maintained its position of world dominance till the war, but by its end the position was changing.

Britain's importance as the world's largest creditor country, as an open and free market for the world's exports of staple products, and as the hub of the international economic system, declined. The USA took the place of Britain as the principal creditor country because of the expansion of its production and development of industry.

Thus the fall in the rate of industrial growth, the diminishing of share in world trade, the increase in its imports, the loss of income from investments abroad and the rise and expansion of industries in the dominions and the colonies brought about a shift in the economic power of Britain. The remedy for economic ills that was applied was the return to the gold standard. But its consequences were not altogether beneficial.

The decline in national income and increase of unemployment and the vicious circle of boom and slump following one another had important social and political consequences. One of the declared aims of the war had been the promotion of democracy. At the end of the war, the common people in Britain demanded their share in the control of administration, and compensation for the deprivations they had suffered. Immediately after the declaration of peace a wave of strikes spread which involved the police and the army against the workers—the coal-miners, the railwaymen, the dockers and others. The Trade Unions were reorganising themselves for more effective action to secure their demands if need be by political action. Their membership doubled between 1914 and 1920. Revolutionary ideas—partly under the influence of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, spread. The general strike of 1926 was a consequence of the unrest among the workers. On the other hand, the employers also organised themselves to meet the menace of labour intransigence.

The English people who had been divided into two sections—the rural and the urban, before the war, were becoming more homogeneous at its close. But the distinction between the upper and the lower classes still remained well marked. The governing class, mainly educated in the public schools and the ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge, still wielded great political influence. A new plutocracy based on industry and trade was replacing the old aristocracy.

The middle class had grown in number and strength during the war and the civil servants wielded greater authority in administration.

The working men, on the other hand, were faced with a rapidly changing situation. Economic inequality was less than before, the real wages had increased and the hours of work were shorter. Education was more widespread, and the services of the common man both as the soldier at the front and as the provider of labour for indispensable defence industries had enhanced his value. As against this, the industrial machine was proving unequal to the new tasks and unemployment had increased. The worker was becoming conscious of his class interests. Trade unionism was spreading. At the same time organisations like the Independent Labour Party, the Fabian Society and the Communist Party were giving to the labour movement a socialist slant.

A new social phenomenon was the rise of the suffragist movement, which insisted upon equality of rights for women.

Social discontent found expression in the national politics. The pre-war social homogeneity of the two parties—Conservative and Liberal, was coming to an end. A third party differing in class basis, in economic interests and ideological attitudes, as well as concepts regarding the functions of the state had appeared. It attempted to give new directions to internal and external policies. The Representation of the People Act (1918) had added large numbers to the electorate, all male adults over 21 years of age and females over 30 were enfranchised, doubling the number of voters. The Labour Party resolved to mobilise all its voting strength and play an independent role in politics. The general elections which were held after the war reflected the kaleidoscopic changes in party strength. In quick succession there were four elections in six years—1918, 1922, 1923 and 1924. Although the Conservatives dominated in them, the Labour Party gains were so considerable that in January 1924 as the largest party it came for the first time into power under the leadership of Ramsay MacDonald and with the support of the Liberals. This heralded the eclipse of the Liberal Party which henceforward declined rapidly.

In the general election of October 1924, the Conservative Party was returned with an overwhelming majority. Stanley Baldwin, the unknown Prime Minister, became the presiding genius of England for the next quinquennium—a rather placid period in British politics at home.

Abroad, the League of Nations was rapidly sliding down in prestige and influence. One or two half-hearted efforts were made to effect reconciliation among the powers, like the Locarno Pact of 1926 and the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 denouncing war as an instrument of national policy. But neither pact prevented Germany from working to obtain the abrogation of the Versailles Treaty, or Japan from aggression in Manchuria or Italy from invading Ethiopia.

In the international field conditions were not at all favourable for Britain whose prosperity, if not its very living, depended to a large extent upon its foreign trade. The war had thrown Europe out of gear. France had undergone terrific sacrifices and borne the brunt of the German onslaught. Its recovery was slow. Germany was reeling under the blows of defeat and demands of indemnity. The old Austrian Empire had disintegrated. New sovereign states dotted the map, complicating communications and trade. Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Greater Rumania were the new states; Austria and Hungary were separated and reduced in area; the Ottoman Empire had lost most of its territory in Europe and its Arab provinces were wrenched; the Baltic lands were freed from Russia; and Germany ceded Alsace and Lorraine to France. Russia was in the throes of reconstruction and Italy was experimenting with an autarkic economy.

The position of Britain among the world powers was defined by the Treaty of Washington (1921-22). It established parity of capital warships between USA and UK and thus announced the end of British supremacy on the seas.

The one constructive product of the war, *viz.*, the League of Nations, launched in high hope, was practically still born. The USA, its chief supporter, refused to join the League or sign the treaty, and the other members were more interested in using the League to advance national interests rather than world peace and common welfare.

The empire emerged from the war in a somewhat dishevelled shape. The white dominions had already refused to play the role of auxiliaries of British economy. On the conclusion of peace they asserted their independence by demanding the membership of the League of Nations in their own right. In the Imperial Conference of 1921 the Prime Ministers of the dominions affirmed the exclusive authority of their own parliaments. Five years later in 1926 the dominions were defined as "autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate to one another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations". By the Treaty of

1920-21 the dominions became independent co-equal members of the Commonwealth. This ended all control by the British legislature and executive over the dominions. This status was confirmed by the Statute of Westminster in 1931.

The other empire was engaged in a fierce though non-violent struggle to gain the right of self-determination.

The World War and the trouble in India had obliged Britain to declare through Montagu, the Secretary of State, a new policy towards India which was announced on August 20, 1917, in the House of Commons. The Government of India Act, 1919, gave statutory effect to this declaration.

The twenties were then a period of conflicting tendencies in Britain. Some of them pointed to a regression of power, and a setback in world affairs. Although there was nothing to justify the prognosis of decline, the British writers were strangely weighed down with a sense of impending tragedy, and of disintegrating society. "Nearly all turned against their age and repudiated it as far as they could."[25] Some went to the extreme right, seeking refuge in traditions of religion or social reaction, others became leftists—self-centred egotists or anarchists. T. S. Eliot records the mood in these lines:

"I think we are in rats' alley
Where the dead men lost their bones."[26]

IX. THE BALDWIN ERA (1924-39)

In 1929, Britain faced a general election, at which the main issue was that of unemployment. The election resulted in the return of the Labour Party as the largest group with a membership of 290, as against 260 of the Conservatives, and 60 of the Liberals. The Labour Party undertook the responsibility of government, but they had to depend on the vote of the Liberals to carry on.

Before the Labour Government was, however, many months old the terrific economic depression of 1929 had overtaken it. Its storm-centre was in New York where there started a catastrophic fall of prices of stocks and commodities. The crisis rapidly moved in ever wider circles, ultimately engulfing the globe. In Britain prices came down, business shrank and unemployment attained staggering proportions passing the two million mark in 1930, casting an unbearable strain on the Exchequer. The sterling showed signs of collapsing. In the circumstances MacDonald dissolved the Labour Government and set up a National Government in coalition with Baldwin, the leader of the Conservative Party, and a section of the Liberals headed by Herbert Samuel. The general election which followed gave a sweeping victory to the Conservatives, but the National Government continued in office, from August 1931 to June 1935 under MacDonald's prime ministership, from June 1935 to May 1937 under Baldwin and then till the opening years of the war under Neville Chamberlain.

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[25] *Ibid.*, p. 179.

[26] Cited in David Thomson, *England in the Twentieth Century,* Pelican History of England, p. 89.

The depression of 1929—32 had immediate adverse consequences for the economy of Britain. It affected the capacity of the country to recover from slumps, because the fluctuations between expansion and regression of business in the thirties showed a marked increase and were more violent than those in the previous years. Production fell. One of the staple manufactures, *viz.*, the output of cotton textiles was in 1935 less than one-third of 1924. Their export declined from 90 per cent of the total manufactured goods to 60 per cent. Their market in India was shrinking. Similarly coal was affected. In 1924, 60.7 million tons had been exported, in 1938 only 35.9 million. The employment of workmen, and the quantities of output both showed the downward trend. In 1929, 35.7 per cent of the labour force was employed in manufacture, in 1938, 34.6 per cent. But on the whole as a result of the establishment and expansion of new industries the situation did not become desperate. The British investments abroad which stood at a total of £4,290 million in 1927 bringing an income of £299 million had gone down in 1938 to £3,700 million and £185 million income per annum. Shipping industry too stagnated during these years.

But the worst aspect of the economy was the diminution of exports. In 1927—29 they had gone down to 84 per cent of the average value of 1913, in 1936—38 they were only 67 per cent. Inevitably Britain's share of the world total which was 11.10 per cent decreased to 9.87 per cent in 1937.

In the words of Ashworth, "in the thirties though many promising types of production were beginning, a large proportion of them were not carried nearly as far as they might have been, or as far as they were in competing countries."[27]

"The nineteen thirties brought burden and cleavages which no society would indefinitely bear with safety."[28] The capacity of Britain to pave its way in the world was one cause of anxiety, the high rate of unemployment, from 1921 to 1938 at 14.4 per cent another.

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[27] Ashworth, *op.cit.*, p. 335.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 431.

During the years before the Second World War the inner economic strains were accentuated. The capitalist class—receivers of rents, interest and profit enjoyed its Indian summer, but the capacity of capitalist individualism to maintain itself in vigour was lowered by increasing doses of state intervention. The growing social conflict between the rich and the poor became more acute.

The stresses which were developing within were soon aggravated by events in the international sphere. The settlements effected after the First World War and the terms dictated to the defeated countries were exceedingly harsh. The old Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires had disintegrated. Germany had lost its colonies abroad and some territory in Europe and Italy was similarly affected.

Italy reacted by accepting in 1922 the rule of the Fascist Party led by Mussolini who established the party dictatorship and preferred irredentist claims in Europe and colonial territories in Africa. In 1935-36 Italy attacked Ethiopia in defiance of the League of Nations and virtually administered the death-blow to the League. The triumph of Italy sounded the warning of breakdown of European security. Churchill remarked, "We have encountered a great disaster."

Even before the Ethiopian incident had occurred, Japan had taken the law into her own hands by annexing Manchuria in 1931. The failure of the League to restrain Japan gave encouragement to Italy in her Ethiopian adventure.

A more serious menace to peace arose from the rise of Hitler to power in January 1933. His aim was to scrap the Versailles Treaty, reassert the dominating position of Germany in Europe, reclaim the lost colonies and unite all Germans under one state. His idea of the state was based on race and violence.

His career was like that of a tornado. Barely three years after assuming the office of the Chancellor he reoccupied the Rhineland, thus tearing the iniquitous treaty of Versailles to shreds. After Mussolini had taken possession of Ethiopia, Hitler entered into a military alliance with him, and soon after with Japan, thus forming the axis of three powers. Then he moved against Austria, marched into the country and occupied Vienna (March 1938). Six months later Czechoslovakia was dismembered and the Sudetenland was incorporated in Germany.

X. BRITAIN'S LACK OF STATESMANSHIP & THE INDIAN PROBLEM

The aggression of Japan against China, of Italy in Ethiopia and of Germany against her neighbours, were an unmistakable prelude to world war. The British attitude in these and similar violent events, *e.g.*, the civil war of Spain, was one of peace at any price and of surrender to the dictators' threat of force. Neville Chamberlain rejected the appeal of Austria for protection, and declared the saving of Czechoslovakia impossible. He exposed the decline of Britain's will to power. The nation as a whole showed in these years more concern for avoiding war, supporting appeasement, opposing rearmament, signing peace pledges, and adopting resolutions like, "that this House (Oxford University Society) will in no circumstances fight for the King and the country", than for a serious and resolute purpose to ensure peace by vigorous measures against law-breakers. There is little doubt that the inertia, lack of confidence and irresolution displayed by the National Government under MacDonald and Baldwin was a reflex of conflicts which vexed Britain during these years.

A similar lack of initiative and direction is observable in the affairs of the Empire. In 1931, the Statute of Westminster set the seal on the *de facto* independence of the dominions. For purely sentimental reasons the British Crown was recognised "as the symbol of the free association of the members of the British Commonwealth of Nations". The vagueness of the formula half concealed the fact that British Parliament had ceased to legislate for the dominions.

Ireland under De Valera (1922) took advantage of the drift in British policy to sever the links with Britain, so that by 1927 Ireland was a full-fledged republic, a sovereign independent democratic state, with only external relations with the Commonwealth. Ireland exercised its sovereignty by remaining neutral during the Second World War.

Since Milner's dreams had proved a vain phantasy, Joseph Chamberlain's plans for the development of the white empire ineffective ingenuities and the schemes of federation unacceptable, no effort was made to think out a coherent policy of organising the empire. This bankruptcy of statesmanship led eventually to virtual disintegration in which each dominion decided for itself not only its internal policies but also its relations with the nations of the world.

The resurrection of the imperial idea in the shape of the Commonwealth is still an experiment whose chances of success are none too bright.

So far as India was concerned, since Montagu's declaration of August 1917 much water had flown down the bridges. The declaration itself was extremely vague in regard to the goal of India's advance—"the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire". What was worse, the progress towards responsible government was to be determined as to time and measure by the British Government and the Government of India.

Between 1919 and 1929 little thought was given to the next step in India, even though these years witnessed a serious upheaval under the leadership of Gandhiji.

The British had really no solution for the situation which had developed in India since the beginning of the 20th century. In the words of H. G. Wells, the British raj was "like a man who has fallen off a ladder on the neck of an elephant, and doesn't know what to do or how to get down".[29] There was no answer to the question 'if a large proportion of such active and intelligent people (in the Empire) became discontented and estranged', then what could save the Empire from disintegration?

The fact appears to be as stated by Tej Bahadur Sapru at the first session of the Round Table Conference, on November 17, 1930:

"You are attempting to exercise that sovereignty (Parliamentary sovereignty) over 320 million people living 6,000 miles away from the centre of your political power....I do say that the ordinary member of Parliament has neither the necessary time, nor the necessary capacity, nor the necessary vision to understand the mind or the feelings of India, and, if Mr. Wedgwood Benn will excuse me, I will say that the Secretary of State, however distinguished he may be, is one of these 600 men. Necessarily he has to depend upon the advice of men in the India Office....Ultimately it comes down not to Parliamentary Sovereignty, but to the sovereignty of half a dozen men in England and half a dozen men in India".[30]

What Sapru, who had been a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, said was based upon inside knowledge of the working of the Government of India. Nevertheless, in spite of Lord Peel's protestation regarding 'a deep and profound interest among the people of this country (Britain)' India remained outside the domain of British public consciousness.

So far as the three British political parties were concerned, the proceedings of their annual conferences do not show any sustained or serious interest in the problem of India; the debates in the Parliament were on the whole desultory, they rarely aroused much curiosity or attracted much attention of the members. "When Indian matters arose, expert was left to debate with expert, and the majority of Members went to dine".[31] Among the general public, retired Anglo-Indians, British families whose sons sought jobs in the civil and military services, missionaries anxious to convert the pagans, and businessmen interested in exports and imports and investment of funds in India constituted the small class who had stakes in India and showed concern in its affairs.

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[29] Wells, H.G., *The New Machiavelli,* cited in Thornton, A.P., *The Imperial Idea and its Enemies*, p. 223.

[30] Sapru, T.B., Second Plenary Meeting, November 17, 1930, *Round Table Conference Proceedings*, p. 24.

So far as the bureaucracy in India was concerned it hug to the attitude of *non possumus*. Montagu who came into direct contact with them gives expression to his opinion regarding them in these words:

"It is no use our shutting our eyes to the fact that the powers that be in India—the Services—are wholly against us in trying to transfer India from an estate which they manage into a living entity".[32]

Thompson marked the difference of the British official class. He wrote: "Those in the services who are most sympathetic to India know how few those are today in their ranks who have the close knowledge of the people and things Indian which marked many an administrator and soldier in former days."[33]

Inevitably the main responsibility for devising policies for the Government of India rested upon the Secretary of State whose term of office was never very long as it depended on the fortunes of the party in Parliament, and whose personal knowledge of Indian affairs was seldom direct or deep. In the words of Brogan, imperial policy "is simply a policy hammered out by conflict and compromise between missionaries, businessmen, officials, soldiers; between people with all kinds of axes to grind from the saving of souls to the making of money".[34]

The Duke of Argyll who had been the Secretary of State for India for six years remarked: "The Empire was regarded with a passionate pride and jealousy—feelings which were but slightly founded on any deliberate estimate of the good we may be doing there."[35]

In the period following the First World War the Indian scene was agitated and stormy. The Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Act of 1919 had not given satisfaction to the Indian leaders and the policy of repression had provoked anger, disaffection and defiance. The first Labour Government which came into office in 1924 was more anxious to prove its fitness to govern the Empire than to conciliate India.

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[31] Thornton, A.P., *op. cit.*, p. 91.

[32] Waley, S.D., *op. cit.*, p. 219.

[33] Thompson, Edward, *Tagore, Life and Works*, p. 73.

[34] Brogan, D.W., *The English People*, p. 155.

[35] Duke of Argyll, *The Eastern Questions*, 1879 (Hutchinson), p. 40.

Ramsay MacDonald sent a message to inform the Swarajists that he would never be cowed "by threats of force or policies designed to bring the Government to a standstill".[36] His Secretary of State for India, Olivier, confessed later, "I came to the conclusion that the problem of India was at present insoluble".[37]

The *New Leader* remarked: "Our failure to conciliate (India) as Labour should have conciliated has meant, in the end, that we must repress as Tories would repress. One cannot in such a situation do nothing".[38] But soon the realization dawned that the 1919 reforms had failed. Birkenhead, the Secretary of State for India in the Conservative Government headed by Baldwin, was a blue-blooded Tory. He believed in the expanding destiny of the British race as leaders of mankind. He held this "destiny as inevitable whether we look upon it as that which is woven on the loom of time by a higher power, or regard it as the reflection of a mighty past, the forecast of a still mightier future".[39]

In view of the worsening situation in India he moved Parliament in November 1927 to appoint a commission of seven Englishmen to make an enquiry into the actualities of the problem in order to give advice to Parliament concerning the changes required in the Indian constitution.

The terms of reference of the Commission show the confusion in the minds of the British Government. Before the Commission had completed its task two important modifications had to be made—one, concerning the relation of the Indian States and British India, and two, the procedure for the consideration of the Report.

Even before the Report had been submitted, the pressure of events in India compelled Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, to issue a statement on October 31, 1929, announcing that the ultimate goal of Indian political aspirations was the attainment of Dominion Status and that after the Simon Commission Report had been published, a Round Table Conference would be held to afford an opportunity to Indian opinion for full expression.

The Viceroy's announcement caused an uproar in Parliament. In the debate held in the House of Lords on November 5, 1929, three ex-Secretaries of State, one ex-Viceroy, an ex-Governor and two members of the Government took part. Two questions were discussed, one. the propriety of declaring Dominion Status as the goal, and two the purpose of calling a Round Table Conference.

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[36] Lyman, R.W., *The First Labour Government*, p. 214.

[37] Olivier, M., *Sydney Olivier*, p. 157.

[38] *The New Leader*, October 31, 1924, pp. 2 and 3.

[39] Havighurst, R.E., *Twentieth Century Britain*, p. 203.

All the five participants in the debate solemnly swore that Dominion Status for India was not Dominion Status. Dominion Status was merely a euphemism. Lord Peel deprecated the use of the phrase because "it is a phrase of indefinite meaning, changing almost from year to year", also because Dominion Status blurred the distinctions between ultimate issues and ideals and immediate practical issues". Lord Reading's objection was that "it has conjured up a picture in India which cannot be fulfilled within a very considerable time at least, and that the obstacles remain, as they were before the announcement was made, still confronting India".

Lord Birkenhead who had been responsible for the appointment of the Commission as the then Secretary of State was brutally frank about the Irwin declaration. Said he: "No man who has or who ought to retain a character for sanity or responsibility can assign any proximate period to the date at which you can conceive of India becoming of Dominion *Status*....What man in this House can say that he can see in a generation, in two generations, in a hundred years any prospect that the people of India will be in a position to assume control of the Army, the Navy, the Civil Service, and to have a Governor General who will be responsible to the Indian Government and not to any authority in this country"?[40]

Lord Parmoor on behalf of the Labour Government made it absolutely clear that Dominion Status was not considered as a matter of practical policy in the immediate present, but only as a distant, far off, adorable dream. It was announced because similar harmless announcements had been made several times before and did not commit Government to any change in the old policy. All the reservations expressed in the Preamble to the Government of India Act of 1919 were applicable. The reservations were:

(1) the progress towards responsible government would be by successive stages;

(2) the British Government and the Government of India would be the judges of the time and manner of each advance; and

(3) the advance would be contingent upon India passing an examination in two subjects—cooperation rendered in administering the government and sense of responsibility exhibited.

In India Lord Irwin made it clear at the meeting of the Legislative Assembly held on January 15, 1930, that "the assertion of a goal, however precise in terms, is of necessity, a different thing from the goal's attainment, that is, from the immediate purpose"

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[40] Birkenhead's Speech in House of Lords, November 5, 1929. *H.L. Debates*, 5th Series, Vol. 75, cols. 404-5.

These reservations postponed the establishment of Dominion Status to the Greek Calends. Lord Passfield assured the noble lords that His Majesty's Government would make no attempt to alter the conditions laid down in the Act of 1919.

The assurance satisfied the House. Lord Crewe gave expression to the satisfaction in these words: "The point which appears to me to have been definitely established in this debate is that this goal (Dominion Status) is not one to which we are pledged, but it is a conditional purpose and depends upon whether the conditions are fulfilled".

Lord Reading who had placed the Motion on the paper felt fully justified and pleased that a clear and unequivocal answer had been solicited from the Government.

But then if Dominion Status was such an illusive phrase why was it bandied about at this juncture? The answer of the Government spokesman was that in view of the change in procedure regarding the consideration of the Simon Commission Report and the acceptance by the Government that the whole constitutional issue should be discussed at a Round Table Conference before it was committed to the Joint Committee of Parliament, it had become inevitable to issue the declaration for removing the doubts of the people of India.

Lord Birkenhead, however, burst this bubble. He held that the declaration was made "because a grave threat had been made subversive of the Government...(and) it was thought that an announcement misleading in its scope, tending to mislead and actually, in the event, proved to have misled, it was thought that an announcement of this kind would have averted a threat to law and order".[41]

In the debate which followed in the House of Commons on November 7, 1929, there was a consensus of the Parties that the Declaration of Irwin made no change to the policy announced in 1917 by Montagu. Baldwin in his speech spoke of a self-governing India equal in status with the other dominions as a dream which may be realised "perhaps, in long generations to come".[42] Lloyd George in the same debate averred, "The talk about India as a unit, as if it were one people, is to display an ignorance of the elementary facts of the case".[43] And Wedgwood Benn, the Secretary of State, while evading the issue of Dominion Status as an immediate objective or a distant purpose, confirmed that the Declaration of Irwin did nothing more than reiterate the Montagu Declaration and the Preamble of

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[41] *Ibid.*, cols. 402-3.

[42] Stanley Baldwin—Speech in the House of Commons, on November 7, 1929. *H.C. Debates*, Vol. 231, cols. 1303-13.

[43] Lloyd George—Speech in the House of Commons, on November 7, 1929. *Ibid.*, col. 1315.

1919 Act.

Thus the coffin of Dominion Status was buried deep in the waters of the English channel.

The Simon Commission which had refused to associate itself with the announcement of Lord Irwin submitted its report to the Government, and in pursuance of the newly accepted procedure the Round Table Conference was summoned in November 1930. What was the object of the Conference? Responsible self-government of the Dominion model had been ruled out, what remained was to persuade India to accept its dependent status for such time as it pleased Britain to reconsider the situation. The Congress had declared in no uncertain terms the unacceptability of any scheme short of Dominion Status.

The Congress demand had been decisively rejected by Government; if it could also be repudiated by the Indians themselves the hands of Government would be vastly strengthened. If the delegates to the Conference would, as anticipated, disagree regarding the composition and character of the legislative bodies, or the number of representatives of the numerous minority groups and the method of electing them, or the structure of the Central Government, the idea of Dominion Status would stand condemned.

It was not difficult to swell the number of minorities or to choose those from among them who were concerned mainly with their narrow particular interests. For every country—especially a country long under foreign domination, has plenty of sceptics, who have little faith in the capacity or patriotism of their countrymen and who genuinely believe that change is dangerous.

The delegates of British India chosen for the Round Table Conference were a heterogeneous crowd. Some of them were indeed highly respected leaders of the Moderate party, whose genuine patriotism, intellectual eminence, political experience and public service were recognised and honoured by all sections of Indians. Among them were Tej Bahadur Sapru and Srinivasa Sastri. They, with the support of the forceful and fearless Muslim League leader M. A. Jinnah, stood out unhesitatingly for the federation of India and for Dominion Status. But there were many others who had no claim to be considered national leaders. They were identified with narrow particularist groups. They had made no worthwhile contribution to the larger national causes. They had not taken any prominent part in the dynamic political movements of the decade 1919-29 which had convulsed the country from one end to the other.

The Congress which had initiated and directed the non-cooperation movement, had rallied the masses in their millions under its banner and shaken the Olympian calm and confidence of the rulers, was not represented at the opening session. The absence of the party which more than any other group was responsible for the "quickening and growth in ideals and aspirations of nationhood which defy the customary measurement of time",[44] from the Conference was like playing Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark.

The fulfilment of the aspirations of nationhood was, however, not the real object of the Conference. What the British delegates had very much more in mind were "the just claims of minorities and majorities, of men and women, of town-dwellers and the tillers of the soil, of landlords and tenants, and the strong and the weak, of the rich and the poor, castes and creeds of which the body politic is composed".[45] Nationhood was the flourish of an empty rhetoric, communal groups and social particularisms were the real substance of the dialogue between the political leaders of Britain on the one side and the Indian severalties gathered around the table on the other.

Inevitably the Conference was largely occupied with the solution of the jigsaw puzzle of adjusting and guaranteeing claims of the Indian feudatory States—about 600 in number, Indian minorities—of undetermined number, the British army and the British services.

The views of the British ruling class concerning India exhibit an amazing persistence and continuity throughout the centuries. India was, according to them, a mere fictitious entity, a tasselation of incompatible races, religions, languages, interests, above all "two mighty political communities—the Hindus and the Mahomedans, and an addition at best of minor nationalities".[46]

Since the days of Clive, the British mind had not moved although nearly two hundred years of British domination had passed and the world including India had not stood still.

It was the belief of the British ruling class which had acquired the status of an *idee fixe*, that diversity and not nationality was the basic fact of Indian life. Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald who presided over the Round Table Conference had come to the conclusion so far back as 1910, that "the hope of a united India, an India conscious of a national unity of purpose and destiny, seems to be the vainest of vain dreams".[47]

Birkenhead who in his capacity as the Secretary of State for

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[44] H.M. The King Emperor's opening speech, November 12, 1930. *The Indian Annual Register*, 1930, Vol. II, p. 287.

[45] *Ibid.*

[46] Marquis of Dufferin—Speech delivered at St. Andrew's Dinner in Calcutta. November 30, 1888.

[47] MacDonald, J. Ramsay, *The Awakening of India*, p. 69.

India appointed the Simon Commission was of the opinion that India would not be capable of supporting Dominion Status for centuries. His words were: "I am not able, in any foreseeable future, to discern a moment when we may safely, either to ourselves or India, abandon our trust".[48] These words were an echo of what another Secretary of State, John Morley, had said fifteen years earlier.

The opinion of the Europeans concerning the Indian educated class which cherished this dream of *Swaraj* was: "The *Babu* is the devil incarnate. He has a nimble mind and no conscience, he is crooked as sin, and in his hands simple-minded westerners like myself (Ramsay MacDonald) are as clay under the moulding thumb of the potter. He is in addition, mean-spirited coward, who sneaks through life doing mischief because he likes it".[49]

In fact the general British attitude towards the educated middle class Indian was a combination of contempt and fear. Churchill's remark about Gandhiji—'the naked *faqir* who had the audacity to negotiate on equal terms with the vicegerent of the mighty British empire', expresses this dual feeling with characteristic frankness. In a broadcast to the British Nation on November 10, 1935, denouncing the attempt of some Englishmen to give India a new constitution, he (then on the Opposition Benches) said:

"My friends to whom I now speak (and I have been trying for the last 4 years to speak to you about India on the broadcast) let me tell you, India has quite a lot to do with the wage-earners of Britain. Why, the Lancashire cotton operatives have found that alright. A hundred thousand of them are on the dole already; and if we lost India, if we had the same treatment from a Home Rule India as we had (to our sorrow) from a Home Rule Ireland, it would be two hundred thousand, it would be more like two million bread-winners in the country who would be tramping the streets, queuing up at the Labour Exchanges. We have in this Island a population of 45 million living at a higher level than the people of any other European country. One-third of these would have to go down, out or under, if we ceased to be a great Empire, with world-wide connections and trade. That would be the fate of large populations of Little England. And then they tell us that the relations of Government, Britain and India are not a matter for the working class or for the ordinary elector. Oh no, they say, all these lofty matters have to be settled by a lot of swells scratching each other's back and log-rolling at Westminster and Whitehall. The working classes are not to be encouraged to take any interest in India. Let them mind their own business. India has nothing to do with them, nothing. It is only their daily bread. That's all".

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[48] Lord Birkenhead—Speech in the House of Lords, July 7, 1925. *H.L. Debates*, Vol. 61, 5th series, col. 1091.

[49] MacDonald, R., *op.cit.*, p. 70.

The opinion of the effective leadership of the Labour Party was substantially the same. Although the Parliamentary Labour Party recorded in 1930 its disappointment with the Simon Commission and its anxiety over the whole situation, although in 1937, the Independent Labour Party (I.L.P.), the Socialist League and the Communist Party issued a joint "Unity manifesto" emphasizing the need to struggle against imperialism in India, and again although in 1941 the People's Convention led by D. N. Pritt with the support of a few not very prominent Trade Unionists approved an eight-point programme including 'national independence for India', in 1942, the Party issued a report under the title, "The Old World and the New Society", which discussed the problems of war and peace reconstruction. About India, the Report was carefully vague.

The Round Table Conference met on November 12, 1930. To the surprise of many and the dismay of some the first session achieved a notable victory. T.B. Sapru proposed that the future constitution of India should be a federation including the provinces of British India and the Indian States. The representatives of the States welcomed this proposal and the other Indian delegates endorsed it. Patriotism and good sense had for once scored a triumph and a unified India was assured belying the prognostications and doubts of the sceptics.

Unfortunately, the problem of the composition and character of the instruments of the federal state met heavy weather. At the second session of the Conference the Congress made the mistake of sending Gandhiji alone as their representative. The minorities, encouraged by the Tories, refused to yield on their particularist demands, and no agreement could be achieved on this vital matter. The apprehensions of the leaders of the nationalist movement, unfortunately proved correct. It was a humiliating and frustrating consequence, but not altogether surprising. The British attitude encouraged the intransigence of the minorities. Nor could foreign rulers be expected to foster the growth of mutual understanding. As Brogan has pointed out: "A foreign government, of men or of angels, cannot be a creator of that kind of unity, its very existence is a check on its growth; its very merits (if it has any) work against that identification of good government with national independence that is the basic principle of modern national state".[50]

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[50] Brogan, D.W., *op. cit.*, p. 191.

The delegates of the minorities were men of narrow interests and limited vision. Knowing that the rulers were sympathetic to their demands, they felt little need to abate their claims.

Laski, who was the private secretary of Lord Sankey, was of opinion that Sir Samuel Hoare and the Muslim delegates were responsible for the failure of the Round Table Conference. But the fact is that none of the British parties was seriously in favour of self-government for India. Even Attlee who headed the parliamentary Labour Party and drew up an alternative draft to the report of the Joint Select Committee was not prepared to abandon the notion of trusteeship. The Party was more interested in labour representation and adult suffrage than transfer of power.[51]

As could be foreseen the delegates did not agree. The initiative was transferred to the British. They could now determine the time and pace of reform in accordance with the declaration of Montagu and in consonance with their Parliamentary commitments.

The Round Table Conference made plain the stand of the rulers. Appeasement had served its purpose and come to an end. So the pendulum swung to the other side. Gandhiji was clamped into prison and repression was let loose in full swing. The Government of India Act of 1935 was placed on the Statute Book. It was unceremoniously rejected by the living voice of India. Taylor summarized the Act in these words:

"There was to be responsible government, or something near it, in the provinces, where Congressmen could play politics without causing harm; a complicated juggling with communal electorates; and a central power still safely under the control of the British Viceroy. The British government claimed to care for the minorities, especially for the Muslims. In practice, they clung to the Raj until that impossible day when communal jealousies ceased to exist".[52]

XI. THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND THE LAST PHASE, 1939-47

The policy of makeshift reform, howsoever unsavoury, combined with punitive measures of deterrence, enabled government to produce a superficial temporary calm. But the passive tranquillity of India gave little respite to Britain. New and formidable dangers had cleanly begun to loom large on the horizon. Hitler was collecting the German forces under his aspiring wings, and preparing to challenge Britain on the seas and in the colonies scattered over the globe. He found in Mussolini of Italy a kindred spirit and a useful aide—

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[51] *Annual Report of the Labour Party*, 1936, p. 84.

[52] Taylor, A.J.P., *op.cit.*, p. 356.

flamboyant, ambitious, aspiring for the revival of ancient Roman glory. This combination did not augur well for Britain.

Britain was slowly recovering from the effects of the world depression. During this period Baldwin was still the presiding genius of the National Government. He believed in letting sleeping dogs lie. Pacificism was the prevalent mood of the people. The Labour Party led by George Lansbury opposed rearmament. Baldwin spoke with "appalling frankness of the impossibility of convincing the pacific democracy of the necessity to rearm".

Yet sombre shadows of the coming catastrophe were already darkening the international scene. Japan, Italy and Germany had started aggressive adventures, the League of Nations lacking support from members was a helpless onlooker. In fact it was fast declining from impotence to extinction.

The imperative demands of the new challenges began to press upon the claims of peaceful industrial development. The pilgrimages of Neville Chamberlain to the shrines of Berchtesgaden, Godesberg and Munich proved of no avail in propitiating the Moloch of war. They possibly aggravated his appetite. The crisis awakened Britain to the urgency of rearmament. Immediate steps were taken to increase production of aircraft, and to augment the army. The manufacture of tanks and guns was expedited, precautions were taken against air raids, and schemes for the evacuation of the great cities were drawn up. Alas, the "peace for our time" did not last even for a year. The failure to remove the grievances against the Treaty of Versailles, the default of the League of Nations to establish order and control armaments, the determination of Hitler to wipe out the disgrace of the First World War, the fear of the Western European Powers of German resurgence and Communist advance, the colonial rivalries and imperialist ambitions, all conspired together to the final denouement—the acme of violence, towards which the century had been moving.

On September 3, 1939 Britain declared war which followed its destructive course for six long years, and imposed tremendous sacrifices. Nearly 3,03,000 defence personnel, 60,000 civilians and over 1,09,000 men drawn from the Empire were killed. Half the tonnage of the navy was sent to the bottom of the sea and some 30,000 members of the merchant Navy lost their lives. A quarter of the national wealth was turned into smoke. Out of 13 million houses more than 4 million were damaged and 5,00,000 destroyed; 51,500 million £ worth of industrial plant was wrecked.[53]

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[53] Thomson, David, *England in the Twentieth Century* (1965), p. 201.

Extremely heavy calls were made upon the human and material resources of the country. The total forces serving in 1931 numbered 463,000. The number rose to 2,273,000 in 1940 and reached the colossal figure of 5,098,000 men in 1945. The defence expenditure bounded up from £113.1 million in 1929-30 to £626.4 million in 1939-40 and to £5,125 million in 1944-45. The total cost of the war from 1939 to 1945 was £34,433 million. Taxation soared to unprecedented heights. The incomes above £250 per annum and especially those above £ 1,000 per annum were progressively more heavily taxed. A family of four earning £1,000 paid 40 per cent in taxes as compared with 19 per cent before the war. As a whole the burden increased from 50 to 100 per cent over pre-war levels. On the highest incomes it reached 97.5 per cent in tax and surtax.

The vital international trade was violently affected. While the imports increased from £755 million in 1935 to £1,152 million in 1940 and £1,104 million in 1945, exports declined from £481 million to £437 million in 1940 and to £450 million in 1945. The war had greatly upset industry. The invisible income from abroad had covered 37 per cent of imports in 1939, by 1945 the income had been wiped out, leaving Britain in debt to the tune of £750 million. The destruction of plant had dealt a serious blow to production of electricity, chemicals, iron and steel industries, and created problems for restoring railways, and building houses. The staple industries of cotton textiles and coal suffered serious decline.

The value of British assets had largely diminished, the foreign assets had been reduced to one-third. British national debt had shot up from £7,000 million to £23,000 million. The balance of payments had been disturbed and the soundness of the pound sterling could be maintained with difficulty.

In this grim picture one relieving feature was employment. The tremendous expansion of defence forces and industries led to full employment, and the greater rise in weekly earnings over retail prices bettered living standards. At the same time the policy of taxation involving higher sacrifices on higher incomes tended to promote social equality.

British economy during the war years and since exhibits two important tendencies. In the first place, the role of government in economic functions had been greatly increased. The days of *laissez faire* were for ever ended. The war industry was fully controlled by Government. Demand for regulation of production, consumption, trade, banking and currency became strident. Demand for nationalisation of certain industries, transport and other enterprises acquired momentum. The attitude towards labour or workmen and society underwent a change. "The wage," in the words of the economist, "is coming to be regarded not as *quid pro quo* for a contribution to the economy, but as a species of welfare payments."[54]

Britain was moving towards a planned and socialist form of society. This was demonstrated by the elections of 1945, for in spite of the immense popularity and prestige which Churchill as the architect of victory in the most dreadful war in British history enjoyed, the country rejected Churchill's party and returned the Labour Party with a majority of 393 members against 213 Conservatives to Parliament. Churchill resigned office and Attlee was installed as Prime Minister.

Secondly, Britain's dependence on the United States of America both in economic and political matters increased. It is true the war had strained the British severely, but the attitude of the people towards the future was optimistic. Unlike 1919 when they yearned for the restoration of the past, now they looked forward to the coming days with hope and confidence. The victorious conclusion of the terrible war had renovated the zest for life. Nevertheless, it was not possible for Britain to overcome its financial difficulties without American aid. Churchill in confessing about the melancholy position of Great Britain said to Truman on July 18, 1945, "We should have to ask for help to become a going concern again, and until we got our wheels turning properly we could be of little use to world security."[55] During the war Britain had imported from the USA a vast quantity of material, largely on lend-lease account. Now an agreement was negotiated by which Britain's obligations for American goods consumed during the war were practically written off—reduced from $21,000 million to $650 million. By another agreement America granted a credit of $3,750 million at the low interest of 2 per cent to be repaid in fifty years, for the rehabilitation of the British economy. This was accompanied with a stipulation that imperial preferences would be abandoned as early as possible. But as the years passed the need for assistance grew.

The post-war state of England at home was critical. The crux of the whole trouble was the fall in production with the result that both consumption in England and exports abroad were seriously affected.

How to restore and indeed improve upon the pre-war general national product was a task beyond the capacity of the country alone and could be undertaken only with the massive assistance of the

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[54] Havighurst, A.F., *op.cit.*, p. 384.

[55] Churchill, Sir W., *The Second World War*, Vol. VI: *Triumph and Tragedy*, p. 547.

USA as stated above. The whole industry had to be transformed from war to peace purposes. The tremendous damage inflicted by war to houses, factories, electrical, chemical, iron and steel plants and railways had to be repaired. Labour was scarce, men had to be shifted from the fighting forces and war industries to more utilitarian industrial occupations.

Notwithstanding extension of state intervention in the industrial field and heroic efforts of the Labour government, the targets could not be reached. "In terms of goods produced and consumed and in terms of foreign trade and foreign credits the economy made only modest gains. But at the end of the year 1946 the level of exports was only 10 to 15 per cent over 1938, but far short of the 70 per cent increase declared necessary to maintain Britain's standard of living."[56]

The Economic Survey of 1947, popularly entitled "The Battle for Output", revealed a most disturbing situation. It portended a 'national calamity'. The Government launched a dual campaign against it—an austerity plan and a programme of publicity. The austerity plan included increases in production of agriculture and industries, control of raw materials and labour. Under the control of Engagements Order, employment could be secured only through exchanges. Reductions were effected in the armed forces.

The necessary corollary of the measures was that military adventurism of the Churchillian brand was tabooed, imperial ambitions and imperialist revivals regretfully bowed out.

While Britain was struggling with her enormous difficulties at home, and slowly rebuilding the shattered structure of its economic and social life, it had to face a most uncomfortable situation abroad. Under the pressure of socialist ideas emanating from Soviet Russia and with the substantial monetary help and trade facilities from the USA the concept of the welfare state was emerging, but the loss of world status and decline of world influence were creating serious problems and jeopardising British interests abroad.

The war had administered a powerful blow to the unquestioned naval supremacy and the unconquerable might of the British Empire. Germany and Japan had lowered the status of the Empire. Even the Dominions recognised the inability of Britain to give them protection.

The White members of the Empire now asserted their equality in function, which was indicated by the designation the 'Commonwealth' replacing the old term the 'British Commonwealth'. It was manifested in war when each member decided for itself the entry into the war. Of the five members, Ireland refused to join and remained neutral, even retaining its diplomatic representative in Berlin. In South Africa Parliament voted for war but by a slender majority.

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[56] Havighurst, A.E. *op.cit.*, p. 383.

Throughout the war the dominions were kept well informed and were consulted. Jan Smuts of South Africa was made a member of the War Cabinet. The Prime Ministers met as equals in London in 1944. They maintained full control over the employment of their forces. After the war Australia and New Zealand entered into a defence agreement with the United States from which Britain was excluded. The dominions had achieved independent sovereign status of equality with Britain. The Empire was replaced by a loose inchoate body which called itself the Commonwealth. It had hardly anything in common either in domestic or inter-commonwealth or foreign matters. It became a sort of a social club where the Prime Ministers or their representatives met from time to time for platitudinous palaver, which occasionally assumed bitter tones.

But British weakness was prominently revealed in its foreign affairs. During the war British influence was visibly waning. Roosevelt rejected Churchill's advice on the question of the war aims of the allies *vis-a-vis* Germany and Italy, Churchill's suggestion regarding the strategy of invasion of France, Italy, Eastern Europe, Poland, Austria, etc., were slighted.

After the war America rendered invaluable aid to Britain in rehabilitating its economy, but while refusing to abandon its protective tariffs compelled England to abrogate its imperial preferences.

England's policy towards the other great ally, Russia, invited trouble. Britain had slid down to the position of a second rate power. The two giants in military strength, industrial potential and soon in the development and possession of nuclear weapons, left her far behind. Britain was thus impaled on the horns of a dilemma. Russia was the old rival, its interests in Asia and Europe came into conflict with those of Britain. Its tremendous armed power was a menace to an exhausted Europe and, therefore to Britain in the long run. The revolutionary ideology of the Communists backed by the government and the party was a source of grave concern to the upholders of the capitalist system.

Churchill's attitude in the affairs of Greece, Yugoslavia and Poland was openly anti-communist. He was straining every nerve to persuade the Americans to rush eastwards from France into Germany and northwards from Venetia to Austria so that the Eastern European countries might be saved from Russian occupation. Even as the war ended Churchill was perturbed at the state of affairs. He wrote to Eden who was attending the Conference at San Francisco summoned to plan the formulation of a future united world and warned him against the occupation of Germany and Eastern European countries by Russia. His words were: "Nothing can save us from the great catastrophe but a meeting and a showdown as early as possible."[57]

At the Potsdam Conference of 1945 Churchill and Bevin, the representatives of Britain, were sorely disappointed with the attitude of the Russians concerning the peace treaty. Bevin was suspicious. Russia "wants to come right across, shall I say, the throat of the British Commonwealth".

After the war Churchill led a crusade against Russia, raised the slogan of European unity, laid the foundations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, and visited the United States to open propaganda war against the Soviet Union. On March 5, 1945, he delivered his notorious speech at Fulton, Missouri, in which he fulminated:

"Nobody knows what Soviet Russia and its communist international organisation intends to do in the near future, or what are the limits, if any, to their expansive and proselytising tendencies.... From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic an iron curtain has descended across the Continent.... I do not believe that Soviet Russia desires war. What they desire is the fruits of war and the indefinite expansion of their power and doctrines."

This provoked the following reply from Stalin through *Pravda* on March 13, "To all intents and purposes, Mr. Churchill now takes his stand among the war-mongers.... I do not know whether Mr. Churchill and his friends will succeed in organising ... a new military expedition against Eastern Europe. But if they succeed in this, which is not very probable ... then one can confidently say that they will be beaten just as they were beaten 26 years ago."[58]

This marked an end to Anglo-Russian cooperation and the opening of the Cold War.

The inevitable consequence was a stern warning to Britain that in its run-down condition and severely diminished resources it was in no position to attempt a recovery in India.

Obviously the British did not trust the Soviet Union. No friendship or alliance with it could be thought of. In the circumstances reliance upon the USA was inevitable for maintaining world power equilibrium and for guaranteeing Britain's security. Thus Britain was obliged to play in future a supporting role to USA in international affairs. A reputable British journal bitterly remarked, "Where we agree with the Americans we are superfluous, where we disagree with them we are impotent."[59]

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[57] Churchill, Sir, W., *op.cit.*, p. 439.

[58] Havighurst, A.F., *op.cit.*, p. 387.

With such developments and in such a world situation for an impoverished Britain imperialism was impossible. The loss of leadership in industry, trade and finance, had knocked out the basis of primacy in world politics. The economic superiority of the USA and the political rivalry of the USSR were formidable hindrances in the way of a monopolistic neo-mercantilist imperialism.

The case of India was far different. It was in a state of protest and agitation throughout and ~~eventually in~~ 1942, it rose in rebellion. On the declaration of war in 1939, India had protested that it was dragged into it without its consent, and the provincial governments had resigned. As Nehru put it, India refused to "come to the rescue of a tottering imperialism".

The British became alarmed and sought to win over Indian support. The Government chose Sir Stafford Cripps, a left-wing socialist and a friend of Nehru, to visit India and persuade the Congress leaders to cease opposition.

But even at this critical stage of the war the British Government was more interested in imperial economic unity and defence than the situation in India. Churchill, the Prime Minister, declared, "I have not become the King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire."

The Labour Party published an interim report on the problems of war and peace reconstruction under the title "The Old War and the New Society", which was endorsed at the London Conference in 1942. Concerning it G.D.H. Cole says:

"About India too, the Report was completely vague, half supporting the view that self-government, in any full sense, must wait an agreement between the several parties in India. though it added that 'it is also the duty of the British Government to take every possible step to promote that agreement'. There was no endorsement of the Indian claim to full independence or that of any other country falling within the British Empire."[60]

In the background of such opinion the offer of Cripps for self-government after the war was bound to look suspicious. The Quit India campaign of 1942 naturally followed. But the results of the war made it plain that the ideas of imperialism or trusteeship had become otiose. Britain had at long last realized that it was neither possible nor profitable to retain political domination in India. War had seriously eroded its capability in men and money to sustain by force the empire. With economic and military power in shambles, and workers and funds required urgently at home to efface the ravages of war and reconstruct the industry, it was bound to be an expensive, if not a suicidal, adventure to follow the advice of Churchill, especially when its closest ally, the United States of America, was definitely unsympathetic and its great rival, the USSR, was likely to create obstructions.

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[59] *The New Statesman*, Friday, June 23, 1947.

[60] Cole, G.D.H., *A History of the Labour Party from 1914*, p. 418.

The British Empire in India had been sustained by the British control of the seas. But the war had shattered the supremacy of the British navy and with the United States naval power ruling the waves, Britain's pillar of imperialism was broken.

It was also clear that for the preservation and security of British interests—finance, investment and trade, it was no longer advisable or necessary to maintain political domination. An independent India could not suddenly discontinue the economic relations established for many years. Any interference with them which affected trade or industry was sure to react adversely on the Indian economy. National self-interest was sufficient guarantee for British trade and finance.

Considerations like these, as also the impact of the rise of national democratic forces in all the countries under foreign rule and possibly some regard for solemn commitments made by the highest British authorities compelled the Labour Government under Attlee to face the inevitable. He decided to send a Cabinet Mission to India to devise ways and means of transferring power. A new Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, was appointed in March 1947 to give effect to this policy in the shortest period of time. The Viceroy made two fateful decisions: (1) Independence should be immediately conceded, and (2) the country should be partitioned and two independent states created in order to fulfil the demand of the minority. The leaders of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League concurred.

Parliament quickly passed the Indian Independence Act. On midnight August 15, 1947, the Act came into operation, Britain had relinquished its authority over the Indian sub-continent, and two sovereign states—India and Pakistan, were ushered into existence.

The long and agonising struggle between India and Britain was at last ended. The British peacefully yielded the demand for independence, but did not change their old stand on the character of Indian society. The country was partitioned to prove their theory. Unfortunately the proof was written in the blood and tears of men. "600,000 dead. 14,000,000 driven from their homes, 100,000 young girls kidnapped by both sides, forcibly converted or sold on the auction block."[61] India had won its freedom. India had paid the price.

From 1900 to 1947 Britain had traversed a journey full of vicissitudes. The years before the First World War had marked the zenith of British imperialism. Then the descent began. It was just perceptible in the thirties, but became manifest after the great depression of 1929. There was a recovery in the mid-forties which, however, did not last long and foundered in the tidal flood of the Second Great War. Though the sun of Imperial glory had set, England's national honour was saved.

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[61] Mosley, L., *op.cit.*, p. 244.

CHAPTER TWO

ECONOMIC STAGNATION : AGRICULTURE

I. The Consequences of Economic Change

The importance of the economic factor as an agent of social and political change needs no emphasis. In the previous volumes it has been shown how the pressure of the agrarian policy of the British Government transformed the economy of the villages, how the introduction of the modern means of transport and communications affected the internal and external trade of the country and how the policy of free trade and measures of public finance arrested the growth of industry. On the other hand, a beneficial result of the developments was to promote regional interdependence and economic integration. With the economic change the revolution in the political system tended to bind all British Indian provinces in a uniform legal, judicial and administrative organisation. The new political and economic forces gave an impetus to the evolution of the middle class and promoted political cohesion. The new class whose mental attitudes were determined by the reaction against the alien imperialist rule, by the growing awareness of the conflict between the interests of India and those of the rulers, and by the stimulus of the new knowledge acquired through education in schools and colleges and contacts with the modern ways and practices of the western people, inevitably developed the consciousness of a distinctive Indian individuality, of political unity and nationality.

With the commencement of the twentieth century the speed of change was accelerated. This change had a dual political aspect: the tendency towards national unity was strengthened, and at the same time minority consciousness was intensified; in social life, the hold of the old customs and beliefs was weakened, especially in the towns, and the rigours of traditional exclusiveness and inequalities softened, but a romantic nationalism glorifying the past and yearning for its revival incited separatist communal feelings and religious loyalties.

In matters of faith rational attitudes were fostered but at the same time the revivalist non-rational tendencies were also accentuated. The idea of progress—material advancement and acquisition of moral qualities suited to modern conditions, spread. Simultaneously moral regeneration was sought by stimulating pride in a golden past.

This pride was a compensatory sentiment for the humiliating condition of the present and was sedulously propagated.

In the sphere of economy the dichotomy which made its appearance in the nineteenth century was emphasized. "The colonial relationship subordinated India to British political and economic interests; it stimulated Indian economic development in some ways and inhibited it in others."[1] The poor multiplied and became poorer and the rich richer and more numerous. Of the two main agents of wealth production, agriculture and industry, the former largely stagnated, while the latter slowly, painfully struggled forward. Indian economy split into two compartments—rural and urban. The former remained mainly medieval except in so far as it was affected by the modern conditions of transport and marketing; the latter became modernised but on the model of the early stages of the factory system.

The consequence of the working of the political and economic forces had been the emergence of the middle class, *viz.*, the class of merchants, traders, bankers, moneylenders, landholders, rent-receivers, contractors, professional men and others, and its growth in numbers and affluence.

"The differential development of economy and unequal diffusion of modernism influenced the social evolution of India and affected the process of national integration." The phenomenon of the integration of small social units into larger wholes depends largely upon economic developments. The transformation of the early medieval ethnic groups in European countries into territorial societies of the later middle ages and the evolution from territorial groups into nationalities in the eighteenth and the following centuries bear this out. The individual's identification with his fellow beings begins in small groups which grow as his interests become diversified and broadened requiring the cooperation of larger numbers.. This process is evident in India. In the pre-British times the predominance of medieval forms of agriculture, primitive techniques, slow means of transport and communication, production largely dependent upon nature's bounty, domestic modes of industry and other factors created conditions of static life and self-sufficient isolated economy. Caste, clan, tribe and village were the inevitable forms of social organisation in these economic conditions.

What the British rule did was to change some of these conditions, but it failed to modernise agricultural organisation and technique or transform industry, which are the necessary conditions for the integration of social groups and growth of vigorous nationalism. The unbalanced economic change induced social development of a lop-sided kind. Some of the obstructive customs and institutions remained, e.g., caste, and the spectre of communalism made its appearance. The growth of nationalism was warped. The masses sinking in the quagmire of poverty stuck to tradition. The progress of industry and commerce scarcely relieved their unemployment or affected their standards of living. Nor did the slow pace of industrialization engender sufficient dynamism to shatter the moulds of custom.

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[1] Lamb, Helen, "State and Economic Development in India", in Kuznets S., Moore, W.F., and Spengler, J.J., (eds.) *Economic Growth: Brazil, India, Japan*, p. 465.

In the nineteenth century, therefore, the political movement was mainly a movement of the intellectuals who, however, were well aware of the deepening misery and discontent of the masses. But they were so deeply impressed with the pageant of British power and progress and of British democratic and liberal ways that out of sheer admiration, they ruled out any other method for the removal of their grievances but that of petition and appeal. But in the twentieth century the movement developed into a mass upheaval, and then as Lenin pointed out, "real politics begin where the masses are", or in the words of E. H. Carr, "numbers count in history". It is the duty of the historian to explain how this tremendous upsurge which was fundamental to the achievement of freedom occurred in India.

The organised political movement had begun in 1885, but a generation had passed before the Indian National Congress had first met. At its annual sessions, usually held once a year in the last week of December, it continued to draw the attention of the Government to the political and economic grievances of the people and to make eloquent pleas and fervent entreaties for their redress. Though some Governors-General took a tepid interest in its proceedings and even looked upon them as a sign of changing times and growing public opinion and therefore worth some attention, in general the rulers were not convinced that politically India had made any real advance towards national unity over the century, or was fit for any system of government other than the autocratic.

Their opinion was based upon the fact that the vast masses were still non-political. For although they suffered from abject poverty, and lived in misery cursing their fate, they were so steeped in ignorance and so stupefied by their misfortune as to be incapable o realising the depth of their wretchedness, much less of devisin means and ways of ending it.

The British naturally argued that they need have no apprehension from such inert masses. Nevertheless, premonitions of the coming storm and of its increasing virulence were not wanting. The general peasant unrest and, especially the Deccan riots of 1875, were a pointer. The severe famines with high incidence of mortality which occurred during the latter half of the nineteenth century were a symptom of the growing economic distress. "Hunger and nakedness and righteous oppression lying heavy" on the hearts of the millions were stirring the countryside and the dwellers of the dark and dingy lanes of the towns. And as the century advanced the lengthening shadow of the spectre of moving and heaving multitudes began to fall across the path of the Juggernaut of imperialism.

The struggle, tumult, terrorism and upheaval of the twentieth century can only be understood in the perspective of the changing economic situation which implied the growing wretchedness of the submerged millions in the villages and the numerous humble craftsmen and workers in the towns who eked out a subhuman existence, as well as the concurrent growth of a comparatively well-to-do class engaged in business, trade, industry and the professions. The working conditions of the two sections of the people, their needs, grievances, efforts and aims leading to cooperation in the struggle for independence furnish the key to Indian politics. In order, therefore, to understand the causes and the progress of the movement for independence it is necessary to follow both the course of economic development of the two sections and of ideological change which occurred during the twentieth century.

II. NATURE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The story of the economic development in the twentieth century is in some ways a continuation of the tendencies which made their appearance in the previous century. But the new century saw the operation of new forces which affected the world and had their repercussion upon both Britain and India.

The economy of India had ceased to be isolated from the world currents and because of its close dependence on the British economy, felt directly their impact. The tensions, wars, upheavals, and scientific and technical advances in the world influenced Indian conditions of production and disposal of output.

The policies of the British Government and the exigencies of the British economy largely moulded the shape of Indian activity, yet in spite of its dependent and colonial character, Indian economy struggled hard and persistently to assert its individuality, and as the century advanced it secured to a degree its freedom of action and mobility.

The economic history of India in the twentieth century may be considered under a number of phases. Its first phase corresponds roughly with the first two decades of the twentieth century—the pre-war growing economic competition between Britain and its aggressive rivals which culminated in the First World War. This period saw the stirrings of the swadeshi and boycott movements and the first political struggle between India and Britain.

The second phase covers the years between the Treaty of Versailles and the onset of the World Depression. During this period Britain was occupied with the reconstruction of its war-damaged economy to restore the health of its monetary system and to replace its declining traditional industries—coal, textiles, iron and steel, by new industries. Somewhat unwillingly it was obliged to loosen the imperial stranglehold over Indian economy—autonomy in fiscal matters, banking, Indianization of manufacturing, plantation, and mining industries.

In the third phase which ended with the declaration of the Second World War British economy experienced severe depression in the first few years but then began slowly to recover. The British Government, guided by the Conservative Party, fought a grim battle against the national emergency, by means of protective tariffs, imperial preference, fiscal reform, the Ottawa Conference, the departure from gold, the depreciation of the currency, reducing unemployment by large-scale house-building and promotion of new industries—shipping and ship-building, automobiles, aeroplanes, electrical goods, chemicals, and subsidising agriculture.

The economic improvement in England was accompanied by a setback to the economy of India. Indian interests were sacrificed by such measures as fixation of the exchange value of the rupee. India became dependent on import of foodstuffs from abroad, and for the first time in history had to export gold. The cultivator was hit hard. Unemployment increased and general dissatisfaction all round found expression in the Salt Satyagraha and later in civil disobedience.

The last phase coincides with the tumultuous war period—its vicissitudes, anxieties, failures and triumphs. In these years economy was wholly geared to the needs of the total war. But Britain emerged from the war victorious so far as the armed conflict against the Axis powers was concerned. Its economy, however, the basis of its imperial power, was ruined. Britain showed little far-sightedness or generosity in adopting necessary measures for setting up a modernised economy in India. It continued to treat India as a colonial possession, at best a subsidiary but temporary supplier of some military goods. Against this degrading status it invited a revolt.

Of the three principal sectors of economy—agriculture, industry and commerce, agriculture holds the pre-eminent position in India, for the overwhelming proportion of the Indian population depended on agriculture for its livelihood and the vast majority of the working men and women were engaged in agricultural pursuits. The predominance of agriculture continued to increase with time, and the growing ruralization of the economy accentuated economic backwardness and poverty.

The first decades of the century saw growing stagnation and deterioration in the agricultural sector. But the course of industrial development was somewhat different. The unorganised industries of the villages after the initial neglect and decay became stabilised, those of the towns were either traditional which were practically ruined or new ones which utilized new materials and took root. Among the organised industries, textiles, in spite of the discouraging conditions created by Governmental policies, firstly maintained their ground and in later years flourished as conditions became more favourable. Jute textiles and the plantation industries continued to grow, while coal-mining after some vicissitudes increased its output.

The capital goods and intermediate products industries—iron and steel, chemicals, machinery, engineering and others made a late start and advanced at a very slow pace. The result was that till the end of the British rule the progress of industry had not reached the take-off stage for a self-maintained growth.

In the commercial sector, however, the growth was phenomenal and both internal and external trade expanded by leaps and bounds. Unfortunately the nature and direction of external trade did not bring in its train the benefits which were expected from it. Commercial expansion was not commensurate with industrial progress, nor did it supply the incentive for such progress.

III. POPULATION

In considering economic history the study of demographic trends is fundamental, not only because facts of population growth have a relevance for the activities of production and distribution of wealth, but also because occupational diversification throws much light upon social conditions.

The period between the censuses of 1901 and 1951 may be divided for this purpose into three spans—the first and the second of two decades each and the third from 1941 to 1951. From 1901 to 1921 the population was increasing slowly and irregularly; but from 1921 to 1941 and from 1941 to 1951 rapidly and continuously. The slow growth of the first period was due to the effects of the famines in the preceding years and of the influenza epidemic of 1918. The increase in the first decade (1901—1911) was 6.2 per cent but in the second decade (1911-1921) .9 per cent.[2]

In the following periods the percentage increase for the decades was 10.6, 15.0 and 14.1. The population of the Indian Union alone grew in the entire period from 1901 and 1951 from 235.5 million to 356.9 million.[3].

The increase in population was very largely due to fall in mortality, while the birth rate remained more or less constant. Deaths were reduced as a result of better methods of famine relief, improvement in health services, increasing use of new medicines, and control of epidemics. But the decline in deaths satisfactory as it was from the point of view of human welfare, had unhappy repercussions on the general economy. Increase in population without a proportionate increase in agricultural and industrial productive activity depressed the standard of living of the great masses, so that the burden on land and unemployment in the rural areas increased. The high birth rate and the low expectation of life had also the effects of diminishing the percentage of workers possessing occupational fitness. The capacity for manpower utilization was lowered and at the same time the number of the dependents increased. "During the last fifty years of British rule the working force consisting of persons between the ages of 15 and 60, was only half the total population."[4]

The percentage of the population dependent upon agriculture continued to increase rapidly. In one hundred years, from the middle of the 19th to the middle of the 20th century, the increase was from fifty to seventy-one.[5] The percentage of population engaged in agriculture increased from 62.4 per cent in 1901 to 69.6 per cent in 1941, while the working force engaged in occupations other than agriculture fell from 43.9 million to 37.4 million or from 37.6 per cent to 30.4 per cent of the total working force.[6] This furnishes an eloquent testimony to the growing dependence of the people on agriculture during this entire period. In other countries of the world increasing populations found increasing opportunities of employment in industry and other pursuits, in India the reverse was the tendency.

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[2] Sinha, J.S., "Demographic Trends" in *Economic History of India*, 1857-1956, edited by V.B. Singh, pp. 104-06.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Coale, A.J. and Hoover, E.M., *The Population Growth and Economic Development in Low Income Countries.*

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Bhatia, B.M., "Agriculture and Cooperation, 1857-1956", in Singh, V.B. (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 113, table 7.

The chief responsibility for this state of affairs was that of the British Government. The destruction of indigenous, small-scale and rural industries which forced the artisans on land was the consequence of British policy. The rise of prices of agricultural produce which began in 1861 aggravated this tendency. It obliged the artisans to abandon their less profitable occupations for agriculture. The decline in the industrial population from 5.5 per cent in 1911 to 4.2 per cent in 1941 is a proof of the growing pressure on land.

IV. Agricultural Produce

The pressure need not have caused hardship if the area under cultivation and agricultural productivity had increased proportionately to population. Unfortunately this did not happen. Although the area of cultivated land increased from 221 million acres in 1900-05 to 258 million acres in 1940-45 under food crops and from 53 million acres to 72 million acres under non-food crops in the same period,[7] population increased faster and the share of the individual in the area fell from 103 in 1901 to 84 per cent in 1951. At the same time the value of agricultural output per acre in food crops fell from 26 to 22 (1900-05 to 1940-50), but in non-food crops it rose slightly from 38 to 41 during the same period.[8]

The increase of commercial crops was a striking phenomenon in the economy of India which marked a departure from production based upon self-sufficiency and self-subsistence of the village. A number of factors contributed towards this development: (1) the expansion of the means of communications; (2) the growth in the demand for raw materials like jute and cotton, to feed both foreign and home industry; and (3) the necessity of meeting the Home Charges by export of grain and raw materials. The tariff facilities encouraged export of goods and the cheap rates of railway transport from the interior to the ports offered great inducement to the expansion of the area under commercial crops.

The results are exhibited by the indices of the average output of food and commercial crops during these years.[9]

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[7] Singh, V.B., *op.cit.*, p. 115, table VIIA. Dr. B.M. Bhatia gives the following figures:

1901-02, area under food crops, 187.63 million acres.
1901-02, area under non-food crops, 33 million acres.
1939-40, area under food crops, 197.45 million acres.
1939-40, area under non-food crops, 42.12 million acres.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 116.

[9] Thorner, D., "Long Term Trends in output in India", in Kuznets, Moore and Spengler, *op.cit.*, pp. 121-22.

	Area under Food Crops (1)	Area under Commercial Crops (2)	Estimates of gross production of foodgrains million (tons) 3)
Average of 1893 to 1896 . . .	100	100	73.9
Average of 1906 to 1916 . . .	99	126	74.0
Average of 1926 to 1936 . . .	94	171	60.6
Average of 1936 to 1946 . . .	93	185	60.3

The indices of population increase during the same periods were 100, 107, 120, 138. So that while the average rate of population growth for the decades from 1901 to 1941 was 6.4 per cent, the average rate of increase in total crop production (both food and non-food) during these five decades was only 2.3 per cent.[10]

Another factor which affected the agricultural system of India was the increasing use of money in the village economy. Cash payments had to be made for rent and revenue, transactions in money were necessary between the needy cultivators and the loan providing moneylenders. Then the expansion of markets as a result of the development of communications and transport gave additional impetus to the process of monetisation.

This tendency affected the production of food crops, so that production for home consumption did not remain the sole object of cultivation. But diversification of crops and extension of the area under marketable crops little benefited the large masses.

The tendency was strengthened by the demands of the British manufacturers for India's raw materials. Consequently cotton, sugarcane, jute and oilseeds began to occupy more and more area, reducing the area under food crops.

The ratio of non-food crops to food crops rose from .22 to .44 in the decade 1936-46.[11] Although the output doubled, the area under non-food crops remained only 18 per cent of the total. In short, while it is true that commercialisation made progress, it has to be admitted that the progress was limited, and its nature and direction were determined by the overall needs of the British economy.

According to Blyn, the output in index units for all crops between 1893-96 and 1936-46 fell by 20 per cent but of food crops by 32 per cent.[12] His calculations show that the total foodgrain output between

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[10] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

[11] Singh, V.B., *op.cit.*, p. 127.

[12] Blyn, G., *Agricultural Trends in India* (1966), p. 29, table 1.2.

1901-02 and 1946-47 declined from 48,081,000 tons to 47,247,000 tons.[13]

V. AGRICULTURE AND DISTRIBUTION OF AREA

It appears as the demand for food was becoming heavier, the ability of agriculture to meet it adequately was diminishing. The figures of acreage per head of population reinforce this conclusion. Holderness shows that in 1911 not more than 1.25 acres of land was available for each member of the agricultural population, out of which it had to meet the needs of consumption of the non-agricultural population and of export, leaving two-third of an acre only for the cultivator.[14]

Harold Mann calculated that in the district of Poona 81 per cent holdings were under ten acres and sixty per cent were less than 5 acres. The Census Report of 1921 found that with the exception of Bengal, the Central Provinces and Bombay the cultivated area per peasant was less than 5 acres. The Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) was at the bottom with 2.5 acres. The Agricultural Commission (1926-28) agreed that in the Panjab 55 per cent of cultivators had less than 5 acres of land per head. In Bengal 57.7 per cent holdings were less than 3 acres; seventy-five per cent being less than 5 acres, according to the findings of the Floud Commission. Coale and Hoover in 1951 give the figure of 1.2 acres as the average per capita area under cultivation.

According to Davis the cultivated acreage per person under Zamindari and *Ryotwari* systems of land tenure in the period 1890 to 1940 diminished from about 2.4 to about 1.9 acres and from 2.4 to 1.8 acres.[15] Enquiries made in 1951 in connection with the First Five Year Plan revealed the following facts regarding the holdings below 5 acres:[16]

U.P.	81.2 per cent or 38.8 per cent of area.
Bombay	52.3 per cent or 14 per cent of area.
Madhya Pradesh	51.5 per cent or 10 per cent of area.
Orissa	74.2 per cent or 30.1 per cent of area.
Bihar	83.3 per cent or Not Available.
Assam	66.1 per cent or 26 per cent of area.
Mysore	66.2 per cent or 25.3 per cent of area.
Travancore-Cochin	94.1 per cent or 44 per cent of area.
Himachal Pradesh	95 per cent or 71 per cent of area.
Pepsu	45.4 per cent or 8.2 per cent of area.

In the twenty years 1921-1941 while population expanded by 27 per cent, the area under cultivation increased only by 8 per cent. From

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[13] *Ibid.*, p. 354.

[14] Holderness, T.W., *Peoples and Problems of India* (1911), p. 139.

[15] Davis, K., *Population of India and Pakistan*, p. 208, figure 46.

[16] Wadia, P.R., and Merchant, K.T., *Our Economic Problem*, p. 253, footnote.

1936 to 1950 the area under cereals increased by 10 per cent but production increased by only 4.3 per cent[17] while the population increased by 15 per cent.

VI. AGRICULTURAL INDEBTEDNESS AND DIMINUTION OF HOLDINGS

The growing misery of the village people was linked with the augmentation of the burden of debt and the intensification of the poverty of the poorer class of peasants and village artisans. The two together account for the increase of landless labourers or agricultural proletariat in the country.

So far as the burden of debt on the cultivators is concerned, Vera Anstey admits "that increasing indebtedness has been one evil result of British rule",[18] but denies that it was due to increasing poverty. On the contrary, she suggests that it might be a sign of increasing prosperity resulting from increasing security and rise in the value of land.

While it is true that the rise of land values was an important factor in the growth of indebtedness of the peasantry, it is wrong to suggest that it indicated their increasing prosperity. The report of the Central Banking Committee (1931) points out:

"The indebtedness leads ultimately to the transfer of land from the agricultural class to the non-agricultural moneylender, leading to the creation of a landless proletariat with a reduced economic status. The result is said to be loss of agricultural efficiency, as the moneylender sublets at a rate which leaves the cultivator with a reduced incentive to raise a good crop."[19]

Apart from the increase in the indebtedness of the cultivator other factors also were intensifying his impoverishment. One of them was the growing fragmentation of holdings leading to an increase in uneconomic cultivation, and the other was the gradual exhaustion of land fertility due to lack of investment in manures and fertilizers and of crop rotation.

The effect of these conditions was that the peasant was verging towards the state of bankruptcy. The peasants were forced to sell their lands and to join the army of the landless labourers. Production was affected and the quota of their rations reduced to starvation level. Indebtedness brought about increasing impoverishment of large numbers of the rural population who had no opportunity to obtain any alternative employment; at the same time it led to increase concentration of land in the hands of landholders and moneylenders many of whom had little interest in agriculture.

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[17] Kuznets, Moore and Spengler, *op.cit.*, p. 281.

[18] Anstey, Vera, *The Economic Development of India*, p. 187.

[19] *Report of the Central Banking Enquiry Committee* (1931), p. 59.

The increasing dependence of the peasantry on loans from the moneylender had its inevitable consequence in the expropriation of petty landowners and cultivators. The Central Banking Enquiry Committee (1931) stated, "There is a general consensus of opinion that the volume (of debt) has been increasing in the course of the last century."[20]

According to the investigations of Darling, only 17 per cent of the proprietors of land in the Panjab were free from debt, and the average debt was no less than Rs. 463 or twelve times the amount of the land revenue.[21]

Even after the Land Alienation Act had been passed, the agriculturist moneylender was gaining strength in the rural areas of the Panjab, as was admitted by the Panjab Land Revenue Administration Report in 1935. The agricultural debt of the Panjab increased from Rs. 90 crores in 1921 to Rs. 135 crores in 1929. The world-wide depression of 1929 had the effect of doubling the burden of debt.

The spiralling of the rural debt of India from Rs. 3,000 million in 1911 to Rs. 18,000 million in 1938[22] is evidence of the worsening economy of the Indian villages and not of their growing prosperity. The peasants were forced to abandon their lands and the production of grain fell.

Alienation of Agricultural Lands

The figures of the increase of debt mentioned above amply demonstrate the increase of the burden on the cultivators. Under the pressure of debt the cultivators were obliged to mortgage and eventually to transfer their exiguous plots of land. Historians are agreed that sale and purchase of land which was rare in the pre-British times became common under British rule. It is, however, difficult to obtain the statistics for the whole of India. In the Panjab according to the investigations of Darling, mortgages were rare unde Sikh rule, but by 1878, 7 per cent of the province was pledged. During the next thirty years the moneylenders multiplied and prosperec so that their numbers increased from 53,263 in 1868 to 193,890 in 1911. In 1930, Darling warned, "There is danger that despite the Land Alienation Act the expropriation of the peasant may begin again on a large scale. There are already indications of the possibility in the Western Panjab where the large landlord is taking advantage of this Act to add to his acres at the expense of the peasantry."[23]

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[20] *Ibid.*, p. 55.

[21] Darling, M.L., *The Panjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, p. 208.

[22] Nanavati and Anjaria, *The Indian Rural Problem*, p. 32; also Patel, S.J., *Agricultural Labourers in Modern India and Pakistan*, p. 56; and Wadia and Merchant, *op.cit.*, p. 273. P.J. Thomas estimated it at Rs. 22,000 million.

From the quinquennium of 1902-06 to 1932-36, the area of mortgaged lands increased from an average of 180,810 acres to 327, 835 acres.[24] According to the Bombay Land Revenue Administration Report, within the ten years, 1926-27 to 1936-37, five million acres or more than 20 per cent of the total land held by the cultivators passed to the hands of moneylenders. The number of the actual cultivators declined by about 9 per cent.[25]

Wadia and Merchant estimate that the transfers of land in the Panjab increased from 40,000 in 1905-06 to 115,000 in 1938-39.[26] In the same province the usufructuary mortgages of land rose from 10 per cent of the total cultivated area in 1922-23 to 13 per cent in 1936-37.[27]

About U.P. the total area from which cultivators were ejected was as follows:[28]

1926-27 to 1928-29 (2 years)	347,421 acres
1929-30 to 1932-33 (3 years)	780,810 acres
1933-34 to 1936-37 (3 years)	911,655 acres
1937-38 to 1938-39 (1 year)	210,424 acres

Agriculture and Food Production

The estimates of annual per capita food output from the decade 1897-1906 to the decade 1937-46 show a decline of 166 lbs., that is, from 560 lbs. to 394 lbs.,[29] or about 30 per cent. The yields of the wheat crop, the principal food crop of India, went down from 707 lbs. per acre in 1918-19 to 599 lbs. per acre in 1947-48.[30] The average output of rice per acre declined from 962 lbs. in the years of the First World War to 728 lbs. in the year immediately before the beginning of the Second World War.[31] As against this shortfall in food crops the output of commercial crops increased and to some extent compensated for the shortage of food production. The index of commercial crops increased, but the area under commercial crops was small and hence the index of average annual output for all crops only moved up from 100 to 110 between 1893-94 to 1945-46.[32]

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[23] Darling, M.S., *Rusticus Loquitur*, p. 326.
[24] Patel, S., *op.cit.*, p. 57.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 59.
[26] Wadia and Merchant, *op.cit.*, p. 365.
[27] *Ibid.*
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 366.
[29] Kuznets, Moore and Spengler, *op.cit.*, p. 123.
[30] Singh, V.B., *op.cit.*, p. 143.
[31] Burns, W., *Technological Possibilities of Agricultural Development in India* 1944), p. 55 (Dutt, R. Palme, *India Today*, p. 181.)
[32] Blyn, G., *op.cit.*, p. 29.

Considering that during this period (1901-41) the total population of India increased by 36 per cent, it is obvious that agricultural production lagged much behind the growth of population. It has been argued that the diminution in food output does not necessarily indicate any deprivation to the consumer, as the deficit could be made good by imports paid out of increased national income. Unfortunately it is very debatable whether the national income increased to the extent required.

Another deplorable aspect of the Indian agriculture was the low yield of land. In the period 1900 to 1945, while the area under total cultivation increased by 20 per cent the total agricultural output rose by 14 per cent only. Thus there took place a fall of 7 per cent in productivity.[33] It has been suggested that the decline of output was to some extent due to deterioration in soil fertility. But this was contradicted by the Royal Commission on Agriculture (1928). More recent evidence, the figures compiled by the Planning Commission (1953), however, shows that between the average for 1936-39 and 1948-49 the decline in rice yield per acre was from 809 to 698 lbs. and in wheat from 623 to 568 lbs.[34] These figures may not be wholly reliable but they indicate the trends. Compared with yields in other countries Indian output was undoubtedly low.

Agricultural Decline and Import and Export of Grain

The result of diminishing food crops was that India which was an exporter of considerable quantities became dependent on imports for its own consumption. While during the quinquenniun 1915-16 to 1919-20 the exports exceeded imports of foodgrains by four hundred thousand tons, in the period of 1935-36 to 1939-40 the net imports exceeded the exports by 1.38 million tons. The war years, especially after the fall of Burma in 1942, saw a decline in imports, but in 1946-47 they rose again and reached the figure of 2.58 million tons.[35]

The percentage composition of exports of food, drink and tobacco fell from 29 before the First World War to 22 in 1940-41; and that of raw materials from 47 to 33.[36] From 1920-21 to 1944-45 the fall in percentages was from 24 to 20.9 and 50.2 to 25.6.[37] The decline in the export of wheat between the years before the First World War and the year 1933-34, according to Vera Anstey, was from 14 per cent to 2 per cent and that of rice from 9 per cent to 6 per cent of the total production.[38]

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[33] Singh, V.B., *op.cit.*, p. 116.
[34] Wadia and Merchant, *op.cit.*, p. 207.
[35] Singh, V.B., *op.cit.*, pp. 134-35.
[36] Davis, K., *op.cit.*, p. 213.
[37] Singh, V.B., *op. cit.*, pp. 457 and 465.
[38] Anstey, V., *op. cit.*, p. 340.

The pre-war (1914-18) average of the export of wheat was 1,308,00 tons, but by 1931-32 it had been reduced to 20,000 tons.[39] Thereafter India became an importer of wheat and in 1931 Government had to levy a duty of Rs. 40 per ton on imports in order to protect India's interests against the competition from Australia.

There were several reasons for the fall in wheat exports. It was caused partly by decrease in the acreage of land under food crops, for the percentage of foodgrain crops to all crops went down from 80.4 in the decade 1897-1905 to 67.5 in the decade 1936-45,[40] and partly by greater consumption as a result of the growth of population. Although much the larger portion of land—about nine-tenths remained under cereal crops, India's dependence on foreign countries for supplies of foodgrains increased. It is not, however, certain that the imports were adequate in quantities to compensate for the decline in the domestic production. Blyn sums up the situation in the following figures:[41]

Year	Foodgrain output (thousand tons)	Net trade flow (thousand tons)	Gross availability (thousand tons)
1901-02	48,081	—176	47,903
1946-47	47,297	890	48,187

Thus though population increased, the amount of foodgrains available remained almost static.

Deteriordtion in Living Standards

The decrease in the area of cultivated land per capita and the decline in productivity combined to depress the living standards. According to the medical standards the average consumption of food for an adult person for maintaining himself in a satisfactory condition of health ought to be between 2,400 to 3,000 calories. Megaw reported in 1933 that only 39 per cent of the Indian people were properly nourished, 41 per cent were poorly nourished and 20 per cent badly.[42] Aykroyd, ten years later, stated that there was undernourishment of one-third of the population. The reports of the Royal Commission on Agriculture (1924-28) and the Royal Commission on Labour (1929) point in the same direction.

[39] Gadgil, D.R., *The Industrial Evolution of India in Recent Times*, (1942 ed.) p. 200, note 2.

[40] Kuznets, Moore and Spengler, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

[41] Blyn, G., *op.cit.*, Appendix table 5C, p. 334.

[42] Dutt. R. Palme, *India Today*, pp. 36-53.

The table which compares the jail and famine code rations with the normal consumption of certain working class families in Bombay shows that while the family budget of a Bombay labourer provided 1.29 lbs. of cereals, the Bombay Jail allowed 1.59 lbs. for prisoners doing hard labour. The Famine code, however, was satisfied with the same amount as that for the Bombay labourer, *i.e.* 1.29 lbs. for diggers in famine relief work. The disparity between the Bombay labourer's ration and that of a prisoner is not negligible. But as the Bombay city labourer is better off than the labourer in the village, the latter's food consumption must be considered inadequate to maintain health and efficiency. In fact he was worse off.

Undernourishment, disease and high death rate are concomitants of one another. Their consequences are inefficiency of labour, debility and listlessness. It is a sad commentary upon British rule that after a hundred and fifty years of its establishment more than a third of India's population had to live in a state of perpetual hunger.

VII. Agricultural Class

The effect of economic deterioration of the rural side were of a far-reaching character both for the social organisation of the villages, and for the general economy of the country. They may be considered under two heads: (1) the increase of the agricultural proletariat, and (2) the increase of the rent-receiving owners.

The agricultural population of India may be divided into three classes: (1) non-cultivating landlords, (2) cultivators including owners and tenants, and (3) agricultural labourers. So far as the first class, *viz.*, the rent-receiving non-cultivating landholders, were concerned, the evidence shows that their numbers were slowly rising. The increase of indebtedness of the cultivators which resulted in the mortgage and transfer of lands into the hands of non-agricultural moneylenders and well-to-do landlords supplies one set of facts in proof. Another set consists of the growth in the number of agricultural labourers because of the loss of lands by the tenants. The census reports of the years dealing with the occupational distribution of the population furnish the necessary information.

Growth of Landless Labour Class

The effect upon the cultivators of the triple burden of (1) revenue and taxes paid to Government, (2) rent remitted to the landlord in zamindari areas and to leaseholders in *Ryotwari* tracts, and (3) interest on loans to moneylenders was crushing. The consequences were that the condition of the classes of petty landholders, tenants and labourers deteriorated progressively, and the petty landholders tended to become tenants-at-will and the tenants to become landless labourers.

It has been pointed out in the preceding volumes of this history that the number of landless cultivators was insignificant in the middle of the nineteenth century. But no statistical data concerning the agricultural population of India previous to 1871-72 exist. The data for the decennial censuses from 1871 to 1931 are confusing in as much as the principle of classification in accordance with occupation changed from census to census. After 1931 the recording of occupational distribution was abandoned.

Nevertheless, economists have attempted to calculate the proportion of the agricultural labourers to the total agricultural population at various census enumerations in order to estimate the trends of social progress or otherwise. Their calculations indicate that during the last three decades of the nineteenth century the number of agricultural labourers was small. Their proportion to the total agricultural population was 13 per cent in 1891. This was followed by a decade in which severe famines ravaged the country with the result that "the class of rural labourers far from contracting, seems to be widening, particularly in the more congested districts."[43] The census of 1901 confirmed this conclusion, for the percentage went up to 25. As conditions improved and the effects of famine wore away, the percentage fell and in 1911 was 22. But then again the proportion started rising. In 1921 it was 26.2 and in 1931, 38 per cent. The Census Commissioner thought "in any case, the change in ratio is somewhat remarkable, even when adopting the lowest ratio which can be compared with that of 1911."[44] The percentage increase discounts the idea that the increase of population from 1891 to 1931, tremendous as it was, was responsible for the growth of proletarisation; nor were scarcities and famines answerable for it.

The highest percentages of labouring classes were in the Deccan and the South, the Central Provinces, Madras and Bombay Presidencies. They were followed by the provinces of Eastern regions—Bihar and Orissa, Bengal and Assam. The Western provinces were the least affected. Apparently the regions of *ryotwari* tenure and permanent Zamindari settlement in severalty were the worst sufferers, while in Zamindari provinces where settlements were periodic and lands were held jointly, as in Uttar Pradesh, the rural population was better protected against proletarisation.

Of the total population of India in 1951, seventy per cent or 249.1 million were agriculturists. The number of landless labourers was rising continually, from 7.5 million in 1882 to 21.5 million in 1921,

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[43] *Report of the Indian Famine Commission* (1898), p. 363.

[44] *Census of India* (1931), Vol. I, Part I, pp. 288-89.

33 million in 1931 to 44.8 million or 20 per cent of the population of India (minus Pakistan) in 1951.[45]

The continuous growth of landlessness is revealed by the following table:

	1921	1931
	(In thousands)	
Landlords	2,845	3,257
Cultivators	71,096	61,180
Agricultural Labourers	25,879	31,480
Others	5,196	6,536

In the decade 1921-31, the proportion of agricultural labourers rose from 291 to 407 per thousand of ordinary cultivators.[46]

The National Sample Survey (VIII round) indicates the glaring inequalities which had been established by the middle of the twentieth century. 22 per cent of the rural families were landless, 53 per cent owned less than 5 acres each or 16 per cent of the total land, while 24 per cent held between 5 and 50 acres each or 68 per cent of land. Only 1 per cent had more than 50 acres, but 16 per cent of the total area. In other words, 34 per cent cultivators owned less than one acre each, 64 per cent between 1 and 5 acres and only 1 per cent more than 50 acres.[47]

Employment Conditions of Labourers

The conditions of employment of the agriculturists show that among them a very large percentage was that of casual labourers, besides a small number of what were known as attached labourers, that is, labourers employed by big landholders on a more or less permanent basis. The extent of employment of the casual labourers in a year on the average was 189 days on agricultural and 29 days on non-agricultural work, that is, a total of 218 days out of 365, that is, they were properly employed only for 7 months in the year, but some casual work was available for another two months. The other classes were employed practically throughout the year, but their numbers were quite small.

The cultivators continued to slide down to the position of tenants-at-will, share-croppers and landless labourers in growing numbers. The agricultural proletariat increased from 7.5 million in 1882 to 21.5 million in 1921, from 33 million in 1931 to 44.8 million in 1951 in the territories comprising the Indian Union only. Radha Kumud Mukerjee in his minute submitted to the Floud Commission stated that 31 per cent of Bengal's total population did not earn their livelihood and might be taken as unemployed.[48]

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[45] Wadia and Merchant, *op.cit.*, p. 344.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 364.

[47] *Ibid.*, pp. 367-68.

Classes of Labourers

Unfortunately even among these labourers there were degrees of poverty and differences in conditions of employment. Those at the bottom of the scale were no better than serfs or 'bonded labourers' who worked under great limitations. They were bound to one master and could not work for another. They and their families were compelled to work on jobs chosen for them. They belonged to the class of the unfortunates who had been forced to mortgage their freedom to their creditors in times of stress. Next to them were the casual or part-time labourers who were condemned to unemployment for about 3 months in a year. The attached or full-time labourers constituted another class. They had no land of their own, and worked as helpers on the farms of landholders who were themselves engaged in cultivation. Then there were labourers who possessed petty or 'dwarf' patches of land whose produce was inadequate for livelihood and who, therefore, were obliged to seek work to supplement their income. Among them were tenants-at-will and share-croppers.

According to the calculations of S. Patel, the total agricultural working population of India numbering 111 million was divided in 1931 as follows:

1. Rent-receivers	3.6 per cent
2. Farmers cultivating more than 5 acres	25.3 per cent
3. Dwarf-holding labourers	33.3 per cent
4. Landless agricultural labourers	37.8 per cent

Of the dwarf-holding labourers 24.3 per cent were tenants-at-will and share-croppers and of these landless labourers the largest class was that of the under-employed labourers, *viz.*, 31.5 per cent of the total labour force.[49]

It is interesting to note that while the total number of persons who followed the occupation of agriculture and pasture rose from 105.8 million to 109.7 million during the period 1911 to 1933, the number of persons who were fully occupied declined from 105.3 million in 1911 to 102.5 million in 1933, and the number of subsidiary or part-time employees grew from 476,000 to 7,276,000 during this period.[50]

Wages of Agricultural Labourers

Generally speaking, the condition of the landless labourers assessed on the basis of money wages was worsening during the period. The Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee (1952) which investigated the rates of the various states, concluded that the wages had fallen behind the rise in prices, but where they had not, the prices had risen proportionately higher.[51]

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[48] *Ibid.*, p. 364.

[49] Patel, S., *op.cit.*, pp. 148-49.

[50] Ghate, B.G., *Studies in Indian Economics*, No. 1. Changes in the occupational distribution of the population (1940), p. 21.

According to the Government's publication of 1946, *The Statistical Summary of the Social and Economic Trends in India in the Inter-War Period,* the index of prices for the year calculated on the monthly basis for the city of Calcutta shows that there was a fall in prices between 1921 and 1939 and then a rise which reached its culmination in 1944. The index moved from 179 in 1921 to 108 in 1939 and then to 298 in 1944.

The wage index of the men labourers of the tea gardens in Assam for the 18 years (1921-39) hovered round 80 and then reached the figure of 98 in 1942, which was 2 points below 1929. In the coal mines of Jharia, the wage index registered a continuous fall from 100 in 1926 to 73 in 1942; in Madras (Mica) there was a rise from 100 in 1926 to 121 in 1929, then a fall to 96 in 1938 and again a rise to 117 in 1942.

The statistics of consumption of certain articles bear out that the condition of the labourers was not satisfactory and there was little improvement in their standard of living. For instance, the consumption of cloth was 12.64 yards per capita in 1920-21, and 14.11 yards in 1944-45; that of kerosene actually fell from 64 gallons (1923-24) to 23 (1943-44); that of sugar was almost stationary—4.6 lbs. in 1923-24, 4.7 lbs. in 1944-45; only of tea rose from .14 lbs. in 1920-21 to .24 lbs. in 1941-42.[52]

The Hardships of the Agriculturists

The perennial difficulties of the agricultural classes were greatly enhanced (1) by the economic depression which engulfed the world in 1929, (2) by the rapid increase of population after 1921, and (3) by the general recession in production. In 1928-29, the value of agricultural crops was assessed at about Rs. 10,340 million. In 1933-34, it was reduced to Rs. 4,730 million, i.e. by more than half. The fall in the money value of the produce unfortunately was not accompained by a corresponding reduction in the demand of rent and revenue, with the exception of some districts in the Panjab. The land revenue in 1928-29 was Rs. 331 million and in 1933-34 was Rs. 300 million.

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[51] Wadia and Merchant, *op. cit.*, p. 372.

[52] Subramanian, S. and Homfray, P.W.R., *Recent Social and Economic Trends in India* (Office of the Economic Adviser, Government of India. 1946), p. 78.

The consequences of the drop in agricultural earnings were reduction in the purchasing power of the cultivators, loss of their savings, contraction of area under cultivation, increase in the cases of forced collection of land revenue, aggravation of indebtedness and the drain of gold. The export of gold between 1931 and 1939 was an unusual phenomenon in Indian history, as in all earlier times India was an importer of gold, in fact the sink of the precious metals. During eight years before the war nearly Rs. 345 crores worth of gold was exported.

So far as agricultural production was concerned there was definite recession in the fields of cotton, jute, linseed, but some advance in wheat, groundnut and sugarcane.[53]

Other Hardships

Of the burdens imposed by the Government and the landlord on the cultivator the story is depressing. For apart from meeting the exorbitant claims of the moneylender on account of interest, the poor creature had to meet the demands of the two exigent masters— the Government and the rent-receiving landowner in the Zamindari areas. According to the estimates of the Central Banking Enquiry Committee (minority) Report, the land revenue realized by Government amounted to Rs. 350 million; the interest on debt approximated to Rs. 1,000 million, and the rent in addition to revenue was Rs. 525 million. As regards the rent, the Report pointed out, wherever there were intermediaries the burden on the cultivators would be much greater than that indicated by the ratio 1:1.5. Concerning the interest the calculation of the Report was based on the rate of 11 per cent. This was low, for the customary rate of the village moneylender came to 1 anna per rupee per month or 75 per cent. Taking into account also the salt tax paid by the cultivators, their total burden would be Rs. 2,000 million, or Rs. 20 per agriculturist. The Committee's (majority) Report calculated the average income of the cultivator to be Rs. 42 per annum.[54]

Detailed studies for the net income of the cultivator are not available. The study of Subramanian is only a sample. He carried out a detailed study of the village of Nerur in the Trichinopoly district, and published it in 1926. According to this study, each inhabitant of the village earned Rs. 38 for the year. After deducting the taxes paid to Government, the dues of the landlords and the interest of the moneylender, he was left with less than Rs. 13 to live on for the year. Since the publication of the Banking Enquiry Report, indebtedness had increased and therefore conditions worsened.

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[53] *Ibid.*, plates 5 and 6.

[54] Dutt, R.P., *op. cit.*, pp. 210-11.

The demand of rent and revenue had increased, as the figures for the years from 1901-02 to 1923-24 given by Radha Kumud Mukerjee show.[55] The statistics indicate that "in Madras, Bombay and the United Provinces assessments have gone up by leaps and bounds."[56] In Bengal the total land revenue increased from £15.3 million in 1857-58, to £20 million in 1911-12 and to £23 million in 1936-37. In U.P. the burden of rents rose from Rs. 12.24 crores in 1893-94 to Rs. 17.53 crores in 1944-45. The enquiry of Government after the Satyagraha movement at Bardoli (1932) found that "the assessment was altogether excessive."[57]

It has been argued that the rise in prices during this period 1929-39 was greater than the rise of rents which was favourable to the cultivator; but the argument is irrelevant, for the small cultivator had a very small margin of his produce to sell and to make a gain from the increase in prices. Comparing the increase in land revenue with the increase in agricultural produce per head from 1901 to 1931, Mukerjee concludes: "While the agricultural income during three decades increased by 30, 60 and 23 per cent, the land revenue increased by 57, 22.6 and 15.5 per cent in the United Provinces, Madras and Bombay respectively. Such a large increase of land revenue coupled with its commutation in cash and its collection at harvest time has worked very unfavourably on the economic position of cultivators of uneconomic holdings, who form the majority in these provinces."[58]

VIII. CAUSES OF AGRICULTURAL STAGNATION

Government View

Stagnation in the largest sector of economic activity in India and consequent deterioration in the living conditions of a large number of those engaged in agriculture were the melancholy characteristics of national life in the second half of the twentieth century. The British rulers of India who were doubtless aware of the distressing state of affairs took some measures to mitigate the miserable plight of the agriculturists. But unfortunately, the disease was very deep rooted, and affected the whole subcontinent and its teeming population. The Government, even though conscious of the enormity of the situation, tended to minimise its extent and in any case was incapable of applying the radical remedies which alone could stem its malevolent course.

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[55] Mukerjee, R.K., *Land Problems of India*, pp. 209-10.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 206.

[57] Wadia and Merchant, *op. cit.*, pp. 343-44.

[58] Mukerjee, R.K., *op. cit.*, pp. 345-46.

Its attitude was either to question the data which formed the basis of the Indian complaints or to criticise the conclusions drawn from them. Though the backwardness of the agricultural economy was admitted, Indians themselves were held responsible for it. It was also maintained that conditions under British rule were far better than they were under indigenous governments, and the benevolence of British rule was proved by enumerating the ameliorative measures undertaken to mitigate hardships and to improve agriculture.

In 1902, Curzon issued a government resolution[59] in reply to the memorandum submitted by R. C. Dutt controverting his facts and denying Government responsibility for the unsatisfactory condition of the agriculturist classes. The Resolution said, "Overassessment is not, as alleged, a general or widespread source of poverty and indebtedness in India." It went on to say, "The existing system . . . is both well suited to the present conditions of the country and compatible with its future development."

Pro-Government British Writer's View

The apologist of British imperialism, L. C. A. Knowles, Professor of Economic History in London, blames India's economic backwardness on geography, climate, weather, monsoon, increase of population, religion, caste, customs, joint family, seclusion of women, lack of desire for material improvement, laziness, etc. She applauds the British rulers for reconstructing a decomposed society, and for raising the standards of life. Her conclusion is, "India is the great example of what a government can effect in raising the economic standard of a country."[60] She chides Indians for their unreasonable attitude, "in these words, At present Indian people seem to want to have it all ways, they want to keep caste and family system, subdivision of land, intermittent labour, and expect the Government to wave a magic wand and produce prosperity."[61]

Vera Anstey, her pupil and lecturer in the London School of Economics and Political Science, writing five years later (1929), held that reform and adjustment requisite for economic improvement "fell within the social rather than the economic sphere and belong to domain from which the present Government is excluded both by popular desire and deliberate policy."[62]

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[59] Government of India Resolution, No. 1-50-2, January 16, 1902.

[60] Knowles, L.C.A., *The Economic Development of the British Overseas Empire* (1924), p. 274.

[61] *Ibid.*, p. 435.

Percival Griffith holds, "Of recent years great increases in prices have so strengthened the position of the cultivators that it is easy to forget how unhappy his lot was in many parts of India in the early days of British rule."[63] In his opinion the "increase (in rent or revenue) was seldom commensurate with the rise in prices."[64]

Other Views

Regarding the list of the shortcomings of Hindu and Muslim systems—social organisation, religious beliefs, practices and attitudes, it is enough to refer to the discussion by Kingsley Davis in the volume on *Economic Growth : Brazil, India, Japan* and *The Population of India and Pakistan.* He sums up the causes of failure to modernize agriculture in these words:

"Actually, for all their concern with agriculture, the British did not stress means of increasing productivity. They concerned themselves with legal rights, tenures, methods of tax assessment, transport, primary processing, and the expansion of the agricultural area through irrigation. Valuable as these were from the standpoint of total agricultural production, they did not transform agriculture from a peasant, ox-cart type of enterprise. Instead, the British spread further the area and increased the population devoted to uncapitalized overmanned, small-scale archaic cultivation."[65]

Vera Anstey's verdit is, "Make a clean sweep of the whole (land) system, including family and legal rights of every kind. This, however, appears entirely unpracticable until fully responsible government has been granted."[66] The ascription of agricultural stagnation and developing distress of the small cultivators and landless labourers to religious and social customs was altogether grossly exaggerated by the apologists of imperial rule. For one thing, it is obvious that the static conditions of society and the otherworldly outlook of people were a consequence of thousands of years of economic immobility and fixity of techniques of production. Stagnation was a response to the lack of stimulus for change. Human nature in India was no different from human nature elsewhere. Only historic political conditions prepared the moulds which shaped the structure and functioning of society.

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[62] Anstey, Vera. *The Economic Development of India* (third edition, 1936; reprinted in 1946), p. 474.

[63] Griffith, Sir P., *British Impact on India*, p. 389.

[64] *Ibid.*

[65] Davis, K., in Kuznets, Moore and Spengler, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

[66] Anstey, V., *op.cit.*, p. 101.

Again the stratification of Indian society has been much misunderstood. It is true that quite a large percentage of the members of the agricultural castes followed the hereditary occupations, but there was always a considerable number which departed from the theoretical traditional regulations. Although religion emphasized the transitoriness of the world and encouraged control of desires and self-abnegation on the part of some, it did not prohibit the pursuit of wealth on the part of the businessmen, or producers. In fact Hindu religion actually insisted on its followers' adherence to their economic avocations. It was lack of opportunity rather than of will which stood in the way of material progress.

The analysis of the objects for which the cultivator incurred debt proves that neither love of litigation, nor social and religious ceremonial, nor improvidence and extravagance were responsible for the increasing indebtedness. The greater part of the loans was taken to wipe out old debts, to pay land revenue or rent, to buy food, etc. In the words of the I.L.O. Report on the Economic Background of Social Policy in Asiatic countries, "the heavy rural debts have been accumulated chiefly as a result of borrowing to finance consumption."[67]

The main obstacle to agricultural improvement in the words of Thorner was:

"For a century and a quarter thereafter, from 1820s to the Indian Independence Act of 1947, India did not shape her own economic destiny. Rather that destiny was shaped for her by her British rulers."[68]

So far as agriculture is concerned, he found, "The decisive factor in Indian agriculture during the twentieth century and probably in the last quarter of the nineteenth as well, has been the chronic extreme shortage of capital of the great bulk of the cultivating peasantry."[69]

According to Davis, the population burst after 1920 was the chief cause of backwardness, the depressing factor responsible for the agrarian stagnation. He held that even before 1920 this sector of economy was overcrowded, but the 44 per cent increase between 1921 and 1951 caused a redundancy of population which affected the average real income of the cultivator.

While accepting the dependent status "as a political vassal and economic satellite of Britain", as substantially true explanation, he holds that British rule over India resulted in a balance of factors—"a greater perpetuation of agriculturalness versus manufacturing and a greater emphasis on public health as against other welfare measures", which accounts for the "mounting unemployment and underemployment, the obvious piling up of people on the land, the scarcity of productive instruments in general in relation to the people."[70]

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[67] Wadia and Merchant, *op. cit.*, pp. 284-86.

[68] Thorner, D., in Kuznets, Moore and Spengler, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

[69] *Ibid.*, pp. 123-24.

IX. FAILURE OF MEASURES FOR AGRICULTURAL IMPROVEMENT

To meet the worsening condition of the agricultural sector Government adopted ameliorative measures, but unfortunately they proved inadequate and failed to eradicate the roots of the disease.

Among them were measures for the protection of tenants from rack-renting. Security of tenure had been attempted earlier by such acts as the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1859, its amendment in 1885, and then by the Bengal Act of 1907. The first two Acts created a right of occupancy for a ryot in possession of land for 12 years. Similar Acts were passed in the United Provinces, the Central Provinces, Madras and Malabar—areas of Zamindari system.

Against the evils of alienation of lands as a consequence of borrowing, Acts were passed in 1900, 1901, and 1903 to safeguard the interests of the peasants in Oudh, Panjab and Bundelkhand.

Another line of help to the villagers was the introduction of co-operative credit societies which aimed at the elimination of the moneylender and the provision of capital for the improvement of cultivation. The first Act to establish such societies was passed in 1904.

The creation of the departments of agriculture in the provinces and at the Centre and the establishment of agricultural colleges and research institutes with the object of popularising scientific and improved methods of agriculture was a step in the right direction. In 1904 the Imperial Institute of Agriculture was started at Pusa. The provincial agricultural departments were strengthened in 1915 and already a number of agricultural stations and model farms had been established.

For relief from debt efforts were made for voluntary reduction, and on their failure, for compulsory reduction. From 1920 to 1946 many Acts were passed to minimise the effects of indebtedness in the provinces. Unfortunately, the Agrarian Reforms Committee's finding was: "We can safely say that the laws for restricting the operations of the moneylender have completely failed." Instead "the reduction in the quantum of credit supply may have contributed to the deterioration in the standards of cultivation."[71]

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[70] Davis., K, in Kuznets, Moore and Spengler, *op. cit.*, pp. 278-79.

[71] Wadia and Merchant, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

There was also some effort to supply improved seeds giving greater yields, to augment the use of manure and of better tools and ploughs, etc. In a country largely depending for water on the vagaries of the monsoon artificial irrigation is essential. To meet this need Government undertook irrigation works. Old canals were repaired and new canals were built in the Panjab, the United Provinces, Sind, Rajasthan, Deccan, Madras, etc.

Unfortunately these measures fell short of the needs. Indebtedness did not loosen its hold. In fact debt legislation shook the confidence of the private creditors who advanced 92 per cent of the total amount borrowed by cultivators.[72] So far as the Co-operative Credit movement was concerned, the Review of the movement for 1948-50 pointed out, "The idea of effecting the economic regeneration of the Indian peasantry through co-operation has remained unfulfilled."[73] In any case the cooperative societies met only 3 per cent of the credit needs of the farmers.[74] The improvements touched merely the fringe of agriculture, which remained predominantly medieval. Irrigation works produced just marginal effects, for in 1929 only about 14 per cent of the cultivated area received the benefit of canal water.[75] It increased to 23 per cent in 1945.

The increase, however, was illusory, as the irrigated area per capita of population actually went down from 16 per cent in 1891, and 18 per cent in 1921 to 14 per cent in 1951.[76]

On the whole the condition of the major sections of the rural workers continued to deteriorate during the twentieth century. The bleak existence and miserable plight of great numbers of their countrymen naturally roused the indignation of the intelligentsia and added fuel to the fire of discontent and anti-British feeling.

Gadgil points out, "It seems, therefore, reasonable to argue that the comparative economic position of the large majority of agriculturists—especially outside the cotton tracts—worsened during the war years and the years 1918 to 1921 bringing as they did, scarcity and influenza, still further depressed it. From 1921-23 the agriculturist was slowly recovering the lost ground but the latest severe depression has reduced him to extreme straits. It has rendered agriculture, as a whole, unprofitable and by materially increasing the real burden of the agriculturist's monetary liabilities it has made the position of the mass of the cultivators absolutely helpless."[77]

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[72] *Ibid.*, p. 292.

[73] *Ibid.*, p. 303.

[74] *The Rural Survey Committee Report* (1954).

[75] Anstey, V., *op. cit.*, p. 163; Wadia and Merchant, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

[76] Wadia and Merchant, *op. cit.*, p. 704.

[77] Gadgil, D.R., *The Industrial Evolution of India* (4th edition, 1942, reprinted 1950), pp. 198-99.

X. GROWTH OF THE AGRARIAN MIDDLE CLASS

After recounting the failures of agricultural policies, it is necessary to turn to the other side of the picture. For, besides the large number of evils British administration produced, it had effects of a different kind also. Though in all likelihood unpremeditated, they proved valuable in promoting the movement of independence. While the great mass of the people were submerged in poverty and a large sector of the Indian economy was condemned to stagnation, there was growing up a small group depending on agrarian pursuits which took advantage of the conditions established by British administration to improve their economic condition and strengthen the bourgeois class which led the struggle for freedom.

Says Thorner: "The net effect of British rule was to change drastically the social fabric of Indian agriculture, but to leave virtually unaffected the basic process of production and the level of technique. The upper strata of the new agrarian society benefited handsomely. The position of the cultivators deteriorated. Capital needed for the development of agriculture was siphoned off, and the level of total output tended toward stagnation."[78]

Among the agriculturists there were three sections—the larger landholders in the Zamindari areas, the bigger farmers in the *Ryotwari* region, the moneylenders—landowners and businessmen, and merchants who traded in cash crops which were showing increase in the area sown and the quantity of output.

In the first section were landowners and cultivators who profited by the rise of prices in food crops, especially those who produced market crops like cotton, jute, tobacco, sugarcane, tea, coffee, groundnuts, oil-seeds, linseeds, etc. "While the percentage of area under food crops had declined, the area under non-food crops rose. The index of increase in area, taking 1913-14 as the base year, was 119 in 1940-41, for non-food crops in general, and 153 for jute and cotton."[79]

Some idea of the increase of the non-working landlords and tenants may be formed from the figures of the provinces of Madras and Bengal. In Madras the number of landlords grew from 19 per thousand in 1901 to 34, and of tenants from 1 to 16 per thousand in 1931. In Bengal between 1921 and 1931 the rent-receiving non-cultivating landlords increased by 62 per cent.[80]

The Rural Banking Enquiry Committee (1950) noted, "A fairly large proportion of the total agricultural income has gone into the hands of the small minority (forming less than 20 per cent of the agriculturists) and the benefit of the debt reduction has largely accrued to this class."[81] The reduction of the burden of indebtedness during the war years (1939-45) affected the big and medium landlords, who also benefited from the rise of prices of agricultural commodities.

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[78] Thorner, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

[79] Wadia and Merchant, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

[80] *Ibid.*, pp. 363-64.

Another cause of expansion of the rent-receiving class was the increase of numbers of intermediaries between the landholder and the cultivator. According to R. K. Mukerjee, the hierarchy of holders of proprietary rights consisted of a maximum of 17 intermediaries. The Simon Commission Report puts it at 50.[82]

The list of lessees and their heirs in Bengal included *Patnidars, Darpatnidars, Sepatnidars* and others and of *Zamindars, Talukdars, Osat Talukdars, Haoldars, Nimhaoldars* and others. What was true of Bengal was more or less true of the other Zamindari tracts. Even in the *Ryotwari* region the better class ryots tended to become landlords subletting their lands to actual cultivators and enjoying rents.

The number of non-cultivating landholders, absentee landlords, moneylenders and investors continued to grow. The tendency towards concentration of lands in the hands of fewer and fewer people became strong. The Rural Banking Enquiry Committee estimated that less than 20 per cent of the agriculturists owned 67.7 per cent of the total agricultural lands in Bombay, 74.7 per cent in the Panjab, and 35.1 per cent in Uttar Pradesh.[83] In Bengal the amount of rent received increased from Rs. 20 lakhs in 1793 to Rs. 832 lakhs in 1940—which together with the proliferation of subinfeudation indicates a considerable increase in the number of holders of proprietary rights in land.[84]

In the United Provinces (U.P.) the increase of the profits of the intermediaries by 70 per cent points to the same conclusion. The number of rent-receivers was 30 per cent in Bombay and Madras in 1951. in the Panjab it had grown in 1946 to ten million from six million, in Uttar Pradesh by 46 per cent between 1891 and 1921, and in the Central Provinces by 50 per cent in the same 30 years. As mentioned above, 63 per cent of land was concentrated in the hands of 24 per cent landholders and 16 per cent land in those of 1 per cent holders.

Besides the growth of the well-to-do landholders and peasants two other groups swelled the numbers of the agrarian middle class. They were moneylenders and merchants. It is difficult to assess their numbers accurately for want of statistics, but the large rise in rural indebtedness. increase in market crops and growth of export of raw materials and expansion of trade because of replacement of local craft-products by imported factory goods—especially cloth, were sure indications of the expansion of the groups engaged in the business of lending and trading in the villages.

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[81] *Ibid.*, p. 281.

[82] *Simon Commission Report.* Vol. I, p. 340.

[83] Wadia and Merchant, *op. cit.*, p 365.

[84] *Ibid.*, p 343

There is an unfortunate tendency to heap calumny on the moneylender and to regard him as the main source of misery of the cultivator. There is no doubt that he took advantage of the helplessness of his clients, but he was not originally responsible for the conditions which obliged the cultivator to mortgage or alienate his lands and to pay exorbitant rates of interest which enmeshed him and his heirs for ever in the toils of an unbreakable net. Credit was and is an urgent and ever present need of the peasant. It is necessary for facilitating the discharge of his responsibilities, but more so to enable him to effect improvements in agriculture. The debts he incurs may be for productive or unproductive purposes. When the loan is taken to augment profits it is not a burden, but unfortunately in India much the larger part of it was incurred for unproductive purposes, and was therefore a curse.

Anyhow the moneylender supplied an essential need, and circumstances condemned the cultivator to depend upon him largely. The Government land revenue policy was mainly responsible for this state of affairs. The establishment of an inadequate co-operative credit system was incapable of alleviating its effects to any considerable extent.

The growth of the moneylending class has a long history which begins with the East India Company's experiments in land settlements in Bengal. Moneylenders went on multiplying as different parts of India came under British rule and the old village economy was shattered. In the second half of the nineteenth century British officers began to awaken to the evil of growing indebtedness of the villagers and of the consequent alienation of lands. Measures to stem its growth, to stop land alienation and to relieve the burden of debt proved unavailing.

So the much maligned moneylender continued to flourish to add to the numbers of the class which eventually found its aspiration for economic advancement thwarted by the politics of the rulers who sacrificed Indian interests in order to promote the interests of the British capitalists.

According to the Report of the Land Survey Committee appointed by the Reserve Bank in 1951, ninety-three per cent of the credit needs of the agriculturists were supplied by private agencies, leaving three per cent for the Government, 3 per cent for cooperative societies, and 1 per cent for commercial banks.[85]

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[85] Singh, V.B., *op., cit.*, p. 149.

If the facts of increase of rural indebtedness, from Rs. 300 crores at the beginning of the twentieth century to Rs.1,200 crores in the early thirties and Rs. 1,800 crores at the time of Independence, are considered along with the numbers of suppliers of credit, the evidence points conclusively to the expansion of the moneylending class. The data collected by Dufferin Enquiry Committee in 1888, the Famine Commission in 1901, the Central Banking Enquiry Committee in 1930-31, and various other enquiries by committees and individuals like Frederick Nicholson, Edward Maclagan, Darling, R. Mukerjee, P. J. Thomas, etc., confirm the fact of the growth of indebtedness and of numbers of moneylenders.

The commercialization of agriculture as a result of increasing production of marketable crops gave great opportunities to the businessmen to invest their capital in raising, processing and marketing of such crops. The smaller fry among them received advances from their more wealthy caste-fellows, who in turn were financed by British banks and export and import firms. Their opportunities increased from year to year. For while the index of annual output of food crops declined from 100 in 1893-94—1895-96 to 93 in the decade 1935-36 to 1945-46, the index of commercial crops went up from 100 to 185 during these years.[86] The old business classes of Marwaris, Gujaratis, Sindhis in the north and the Chettis of Madras were the main beneficiaries of this development.

Digby makes out on the basis of the figures collected by J. Seymour Keay M.P. that at the beginning of the 20th century there were 10,000 members of the large landowning classes including princes and zamindars, earning £5,000 each per annum, 75,000 bankers, merchants and professional men earning £1,000 per annum each and 75,000 traders, shopkeepers, etc., with £100 a year each. Between them they (835,000) accounted for more than half the national income, leaving for over 200 million people less than half to distribute among themselves.[87] Their numbers during the next half century grew as a result of increasing crops of agricultural raw materials. In the fifty years of the twentieth century the output ratio of non-food crops to food crops had doubled;[88] the actual increase in the former being 85 per cent. This led naturally to increase of internal and external trade. The development of internal transport system by road and railways and external transport by steamships gave great impetus to the commercialization of agriculture and the movement of goods. The fluctuations in trade due to the two World Wars and the great depression of

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[86] Digby, W., *Prosperous British India* (1901), pp. 615-16.

[87] Blyn, G., *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[88] Singh, V.B., *op., cit,* p. 126.

1929 notwithstanding, the volume and value of trade gave increasing opportunities to traders to improve their financial condition.

An important characteristic of trade in raw materials and food was that the Indian traders played the part of agents—suppliers and distributors, to the principal European firms which handled the goods wholesale, and reaped the big profits. For export of jute Calcutta was the main port and for cotton Bombay. The difference between them was that the Calcutta business was largely managed by the British firms directly, while in Bombay Indians—Gujaratis and Parsis, had a large share.

The procurement of cotton and opium and their export to the markets abroad, and trade in cotton yarn gave to the Indian merchants the idea of establishing at first yarn and later textile factories in Bombay and the neighbouring cotton-producing area.

Apart from Gujarati moneylenders, merchants and industrialists, the Marwaris played an active role in business. They were mainly interested in moneylending and they appeared in the Deccan and Western India in increasing numbers after the fall of the Maratha rule. They came to command a big share in the credit system of Western India. Both Gujaratis and Marwaris gradually spread all over India. They combined the business of moneylending and trade from the village upwards. The Marwaris whose home state was Rajputana occupied a prominent place in moneylending and trade in Maharashtra, the Central Provinces, the United Provinces, Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, and other important centres. Their business was largely confined to financing and marketing small industries, processing of agricultural products like cotton.

In Bengal the rise of a middle class of agents, compradors and petty officials and the development from them of a rural landholding class, which gave rise to numerous groups of rentiers of many grades, have been described above. In the twentieth century trade grew, Bengali landholders as well as merchants and businessmen from other provinces, *e.g.* the Marwaris, took the opportunity to enter into the enterprise, but they had to face a hard competition from foreign firms. They found the profits from land were ampler than those from industry and therefore took little interest in the development of the jute textiles or plantation industries—tea, indigo, etc.

To conclude, although it is difficult to estimate accurately the strength of the agricultural middle class, yet with the incomplete and not wholly reliable data available, the statistics adduced above indicate that the number, wealth and influence of this class increased considerably during the twentieth century.

CHAPTER THREE

ECONOMIC STAGNATION : INDUSTRY AND TRADE

The second important division of the economy of India, namely, industry, showed the same differential pattern of development as did agriculture. This differential clearly appears when the two branches of industry—unorganised and organised, are analysed. While the unorganised cottage industries of towns and villages in the twentieth century were declining and disintegrating, the organised industries were showing a slow and unequal growth. In some sectors there was progress, but as a whole the growth was lop-sided and the economy did not advance as a comprehensive organic activity. Some industries depending on primary agricultural products were established by the end of the nineteenth century, but the basic industries of iron, steel and coal lagged behind and consequently one of the essential conditions for an industrial revolution was held up in India.

I. UNORGANISED INDUSTRY

The medieval art and craft industries of India were either located in towns or villages. The urban handicrafts catered to the needs largely of the noble and the rich and provided much of the exports of manufactured goods to foreign countries. This sector suffered a great setback and some of the industries died out.

With the turn of the century new forces forged ahead, the Indian political movement became vigorous, and village industry received a fresh impetus as a result of the Swadeshi movement. During the last years of the nineteenth century the British attitude to the demand of industrial development was fraying tempers, and Curzon's oratorical essays pouring out ridicule and Government's unpopular administrative measures, especially the Partition of Bengal, were stoking the fires of discontent. It was becoming obvious that the assumption of the Congress leaders that the Government was amenable to reason and that constitutional methods of ventilating grievances were adequate required reconsideration and that fresh means of pressing demands were needed. At this juncture examples from abroad attracted attention. The Irish patriots had shown the way. In the eighties the weapon of boycott was first used by them against the landlords and soon became a powerful instrument of political warfare. In 1902, Griffith founded the Irish League and formulated the policy of Sinn Fein (Ourselves), which became the battle-cry of Irish Home Rulers.

In India, Swadeshi (of our own land) and Boycott were adopted against the government policies as measures of retaliation. They soon came to signify national self-respect and self-reliance. In consequence a revival of handloom industry began in Bengal and from there spread to the different regions of India. From 1919 Gandhiji's powerful campaign in favour of *Charkha* (spinning wheel) and *Khaddar* (hand-made cloth) provided an incentive to the resuscitation of the village industries.

The rehabilitation of cotton industry thus grew apace from 1906-07 onwards. R. K. Mukerjee showed that the recovery was most marked in the regions where weaving catered for the specific requirements of the local consumers. The amount of cloth produced on handlooms increased from 1,033.2 million yards in 1905-06 to 1,703.2 million yards in 1938-39. Since the establishment of the All-India Spinners' Association the progress of the industry was as follows:[1]

In 1924-25 *khaddar* worth Rs. 9.5 lakhs was produced.
1930-31 ,, ,, ,, 72 ,, ,, ,,
1935 ,, ,, ,, 32 ,, ,, ,,
1941-42 ,, ,, ,, 1.2 crores ,, ,,
1944-45 ,, ,, ,, 1.34 ,, ,, ,

It has been estimated that one-third of the cloth consumed in India is produced by the handloom. That the weaving industry of the villages has not wholly succumbed to the competition of factory industry is due to special circumstances. The noteworthy among them are: (1) the nature of the villagers' demand, and (2) the financial capacity of the purchasers.

Nevertheless, the industry had a chequered career. It would not be far-fetched to conclude that although the industry contributed a considerable share to the production of textile goods it had not, in spite of the stimulus of swadeshi movement of 1906, Gandhiji's support, and some backing from Government, improved the condition of the weaver to any marked degree.

Venkataraman's conclusions concerning the handloom weaving industry were (1) that the condition of the weaver was at its worst during the last century, especially during the period of free trade in India, and (2) that there was nothing to show that his economic conditions had materially improved during the last sixty years.[2]

Thus notwithstanding the stimulus administered after 1904, the village industry as a whole did not prosper. Throughout the nineteenth century it continued its downward course and although some of it was stabilized in the twentieth century, e.g. weaving, ironsmithy, carpentry, the break-up of rural economy had an adverse effect upon the arts and crafts of the village. Gadgil says:

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[1] Wadia and Merchant, *op. cit.*, p. 606.

[2] Venkataraman, K. S., *The Handloom Industry in South India* (1935), p. 190.

"The village industry was a decaying industry. Large numbers of those thrown out took (to) ordinary labour, while a fortunate few were absorbed in industry in the towns; some also took to agriculture, while for the rest, i.e., those who still retained their hereditary occupations, they remained, where they always were, a poverty-stricken class, abnormally sensitive to the variations of the seasons."[3]

In spite of a hundred and fifty years of British rule, or may be because of it, rural India or nearly eighty per cent of India was dragging out a stagnant life in which there was no hope of betterment. The vicious circle between growing numbers and static economy was thrusting the country into the arms of a dangerous crisis.

II. Organised Industry

The situation so far as organised industry is concerned was extraordinary. There were two sectors of the industry—plantations and factories. Among the first the main industries were indigo, tea, coffee and rubber; among the second textiles, coal-mining, engineering, iron and steel, chemicals.

III. Industry for Consumer Goods

The extraordinary aspect of these industries was that those belonging to the first category were largely owned and managed by Europeans, and that among industries of the second category, with the exception of textiles, the capital and management were largely European. Even for textiles European managers and technicians were employed. These industries were organised as joint stock companies and functioned under the managing agency system—the agents being largely Europeans. In the year 1931-32 the companies, registered outside India, mostly in the United Kingdom, numbered 911 with the sterling capital of £756 million. The number of companies registered in India was 7,998 with the rupee capital of Rs. 286 crores or nearly £ 214 million (£ 1 is equal to Rs. 13 as. 5 p. 4).

The beneficiaries of the organised industry were thus chiefly foreigners. Much of the profit accruing in India went abroad, the experience of entrepreneurship and management, did not remain in the country to benefit the children of the soil and did not pave the way for a take-over by Indians. The Government showed special favours to these foreign companies. It encouraged the British entrepreneurs of factories and helped the planters in procuring labour which was treated most callously. On the other hand, its attitude towards the Indian-owned textile industry which entered into rivalry with the British manufacturers was till 1923 unfriendly.

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[3] Gadgil, D.R., *op. cit.*, p. 172.

In the nineteenth century the free western nations with the active support of their governments were becoming fast industrialized and following in the steps of the industrial revolution in Britain. The United States of America and Switzerland were the pioneers. In the United States, soon after independence, protective tariffs were imposed to foster home industry; and, in less than a century, the industry of the United States had overtaken the British and then surpassed it. Many European countries followed—Belgium, France, Germany, Austria, Russia and Sweden. In all these countries industrialization was promoted by protection or aid, so that by 1860 they could not only withstand British competition but became more and more independent of imports from Britain. Among the continental countries Germany rapidly forged ahead and, before the century was out, challenged British hegemony.

Some other European countries—Italy, Netherlands, Denmark and Greece, entered the race, closely followed by Canada and Japan soon after 1860. It is remarkable that in spite of the lack of mineral resources Holland, Denmark and Switzerland built up advanced industrial economies.

A general survey of the industrial development of the first half of the twentieth century clearly indicates the backwardness of India, the stagnation of its economy and the increasing complexity of its social problems. Making every allowance for the growth of the textile industry and the other consumer industries, as also for the initiation of the iron and steel industry, the fact remains that the progress of industrialization was disappointingly slow and hence the misery of the vast masses of the people remained unrelieved.

At the turn of the century India was still a predominantly agricultural country, and whatever industrial development had taken place was more British than Indian. This was a curious phenomenon. British capital, enterprise, managerial and technical skill employing Indian labour and raw materials earned large profits and transferred them from India to Britain. Indian labourers slaved for their British masters to enhance their wealth and power and received in recompense a pittance in wages and squalid conditions of living. About the tea plantations Buchanan's evidence is damning.[4]

In factories and mines the labourers lived under inhuman conditions whether the proprietors were Indians or Englishmen. The

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[4] Buchanan, D.H., *The Development of Capitalist Enterprise in India*, p. 52.

Bombay Factory Labour Commission's report regarding the conditions in the cotton gins and presses, Curzon's investigations regarding the working of the coal mines, the returns on employment of women and children and Parliamentary Papers attest to the vicious treatment of the workers in the industries. Fourteen to fifteen hours, sometimes eighteen hours, a day were usual in cotton gins and presses both for men and women. The pay for the hands who worked from 4 a.m. to 10 p.m. was 3 to 4 annas per day.[5] The manager of a factory who gave evidence before the Commission drily remarked, "Those working these excessive hours frequently died."[6]

In the last half century of British rule the situation changed so far as working conditions were concerned, but the progress of industrialization continued to be unsatisfactory. Of the two stages of organised industry the one which produces consumer goods came first. Its emergence marked just one stage in advance of the agriculturally dominant economy. The main branches of this industry are food and drink, textiles—cotton, silk and jute, leather goods, articles of wood and mining of coal. In India the factors responsible for the growth of this industry were the decline of handicrafts as a result of the import of cheap textiles from abroad, the impulse given by the investment of capital from the United Kingdom, and the accumulation of capital in the hands of the Indian merchant class—particularly belonging to the Bombay Presidency, from trade in opium and cotton with countries like China, and from supplying articles for export and selling goods imported from Britain. Two factors which facilitated the growth were availability of raw materials and the existence of markets in the country and outside.

Among the earliest of the organised plantation industries were those concerned with the production of indigo, tea, coffee, and a little later, rubber. Between 1850 and 1900 progress in plantation industries except indigo was rapid. By the beginning of the twentieth century there were 525,000 acres under tea cultivation, and 100,000 acres under coffee, but indigo cultivation was fast declining and the area had fallen to one-third of what it was in the beginning.

By 1949-50 the acreage under tea had risen to over 800,000 and the output to over 600 million pounds, and for coffee the figures for the same period were 220,000 acres and 50 million pounds. India produced about 12,000 metric tons of rubber in the factories.

The plantation industries were lucky. They were almost completely under the ownership and control of Britons and naturally enjoyed the favour of the Government.

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[5] *Ibid.*, p. 304.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 305.

IV. LARGE-SCALE INDUSTRY

The factory industries, however, were not fortunate enough to attract an equally friendly attitude of the rulers. In their case, however, the other circumstances were so favourable as to compensate to some extent the indifference and discouragement from Government. Government obstruction slowed down their growth and retarded the evolution of the capital-goods industry.

Textiles—Cotton

The cotton mill industry was largely concentrated in Western India, especially Bombay. There were predisposing factors in favour of its development. Raw material was easily available as cotton was produced in abundance in the Bombay Presidency, Gujarat, Kutch, Berar and the Central Provinces—all within easy distance of Bombay and Ahmedabad where the mills were concentrated. The supply of labour was plentiful, for the villages had a surplus of the unemployed.

The Bombay merchants—Parsis, Bhatias and Bohras, had grown in wealth from foreign trade, which had been expanding every year. Unlike Bengal and other northern zamindari provinces, investment in land under the *ryotwari* system of tenure was not equally attractive. The commercial capital so collected had, therefore, sufficient inducement for investment in textile industry.

The markets for the cotton mills were ample. The Chinese were the principal customers of Indian yarn and piece-goods. For instance, from 1904-05 to 1908-09 of the total exports of 248 million pounds of yarn 220.7 million pounds were taken by China.[7] From the second decade Japanese competition and rise of cotton industry in China led to progressive deterioration of this market. This was however compensated by a growing internal market in the country both for yarn and cloth.

Against these favourable factors the industry had to face the opposition of the Lancashire cotton factory owners during the first three decades of the century, which compelled the Government to refuse any protection to the nascent Indian industry till 1923.

Nevertheless, the textile industry registered considerable advance from 1900 to 1950. The first yarn mill was started in 1854 and the weaving mill in 1860. The cotton boom of 1861-62 gave a further impetus to the cotton industry, with the result that among the merchants an industrial capitalist class arose. By 1905 there were 69 cotton mills in Bombay with 2,124,000 spindles; in 1911 there were

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[7] Singh, V.B. *op. cit.*, p. 240.

87 mills with 2,890,000 spindles; in 1941, 65 mills with 2,780,000 spindles. The number of mills in the Bombay Presidency rose from 182 in 1911 to 202 in 1941,[8] and in the whole of India (outside Bombay) from 261 mills in 1911 to 390 in 1941. In 1900-01 India produced 353 million pounds of yarn and 422 million yards of cloth; in 1947 the production of yarn had risen to 1,330 million pounds and of cloth to 3,770 million yards.[9]

The cotton industry was predominantly an Indian industry, yet in the early stages many Europeans were employed for managerial and technical functions, although later Indians replaced them. In 1948, the foreign capital invested in the industry was only 21 per cent of the total.[10]

An interesting development of cotton industry was the considerable replacement of the original pioneering proprietors—Parsis, Bhatias, Bohras and Europeans, by Marwaris and Gujaratis in the mills of Bombay, Ahmedabad and other parts of India and the concentration of the ownership of the mills in the hands of a few managing agents.

The cotton industry was the largest of the factory industries of India maintained by private enterprise, so far as the investment of capital, the value of output and the number of workers employed were concerned.

The progress since 1895 was continuous although there were severe famines at the end of the nineteenth century, and the onset of bubonic plague which broke out in a violent form in 1896. It weathered the speculation and subsequent rise in cotton price of USA (1902) and the practical loss of the Chinese market for Indian yarn. In spite of other adverse factors and the booms and depressions of the post-war period, the competition of foreign goods and of handloom industry, the production of the mills continued to increase. There were ups and downs in the industry during the half century, but on the whole it continued to expand.

The growth had a marked effect upon imports from foreign countries. In 1900-01 India had imported 1875 million yards of cloth from abroad, the peak was reached in 1913-14 when 2,400 million were imported, but in 1947-48 the imports were reduced to 26 million yards only.[11]

Jute

The other large textile industry was that of jute, which was almost wholly in European hands and, therefore, enjoyed conditions even more favourable to its growth. Raw material and labour power were plentiful, the growth of demand for jute goods in the world was rapidly increasing, and capital was unstintingly provided by the British capitalists. The Government smiled on the undertaking. The industry was concentrated in Bengal, the home of raw jute.

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[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 224-25.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 247.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 293, note, quotes Malhotra Brothers, *Bharat Yearbook* 1951 (Delhi, 1952), p. 284.

[11] Singh, V.B., *op. cit.*, pp. 238 and 247.

Sugar

The other industries of this group were food and drink, leather and wood. Among them the one which requires attention is the sugar industry, the others being of small importance. The sugar industry was in a bad way at the turn of the century. The growth of beet sugar industry, the competition of cheap sugar from Mauritius and Java and the protected sugar industry of America forced down prices and obliged India to reduce the area under sugarcane. At the commencement of the century sugar industry of India was in decline and imports from abroad were increasing rapidly. The war of 1914-18 gave a stimulus to cane production and the area under the crop increased. In 1931-32 provisional protection was accorded and in the next year (1932) the Sugar Industry Protection Act was passed. The protective duty provided the necessary incentive and the industry rapidly developed.[12]

Coal

Among the industries dealing with minerals the coal industry made considerable advance, for it supplied the growing needs of railways and factories and was not much affected by the vicissitudes of agriculture. In the opening decade of the twentieth century the output of coal increased. The war gave an impetus to production but this was followed by a long period of stagnation which was ended by the increase of demand about 1936. The war of 1939-45 gave a further stimulus. Production went up and exports increased.

Capital Goods Industry

Unfortunately, although the country progressed in the industries producing consumable articles especially after 1914, the expected impetus for advance to the second stage of development did not take place. The key industries for a genuine industrial revolution are iron and steel, machinery, engineering and chemicals. In 1925, the net output ratio of consumer goods industries and the capital goods industry in India was 4.2, while in Japan in the same year the ratio was 2:4 and in the British dominions—Canada 1:7, South Africa 1:8,

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[12] Jathar, G.B. and Beri, S.G., *Indian Economics*, Vol. I (ninth edition, 1949), pp. 142-48.

Australia 1:7 and New Zealand 3:4.[13] Ranade's optimistic hopes had proved exaggerated. He had written in 1898, "I have placed before you what appear to be good grounds for the hope I entertain, that India has now fairly entered upon the path which, if pursued in the same spirit which has animated its capitalists hitherto, cannot fail to work out its industrial salvation."[14]

The non-fulfilment of Ranade's hope is explained if the progress of these industries during the period is examined.

Iron and Steel

The iron and steel industry was a late comer in the field. Although the Bengal Iron Company was founded in 1889, it was producing only 40,000 tons of pig iron annually in 1906-07, while India imported from the United Kingdom nearly 800,000 tons of iron and steel.[15] Meanwhile J. N. Tata who had made a fortune in cotton textiles became interested in iron manufacture. He planned to build a foundry at Warora in the Central Provinces, but failed to obtain Government sanction. He revived the scheme in 1907 encouraged by George Hamilton, the then Secretary of State for India. In 1911 the factory started work and produced pig iron. Two years later the first steel ingots came out. Under the stimulus of war the factory expanded and in 1921-22 the output reached the figures of 270,000 for pig iron and 152,000 for steel.[16] But the fall of prices after the war and the increase in rates of production hit the industry hard.

The newly constituted Tariff Board made enquiries and recommended Government aid. In 1934, 1937 and 1939 the Steel Protection Acts provided discriminating protection which stimulated production to 800,000 tons a year in 1939.

The progress of the basic key industry of iron and steel may have been continuous, but it hardly met the needs of the country, as the rising quantities of imports show :

1914-18 average per annum	422,000 tons
Inter-war years per annum	661,000 tons
1929-30 per annum	968,000 tons

Chemicals

The case of the large-scale chemical industries was no better. In spite of favourable conditions so far as raw materials and markets were concerned and in spite of the vast potentialities of the country, the development was halting.

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[13] Hoffmann, W.G., *The Growth of Industrial Economics*, Appendix, Table L.

[14] Ranade, M.G. *Essays on Indian Economics*, p. 118.

[15] Jathar and Beri, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 36.

[16] Gadgil., D.R., *op. cit.*, p. 252.

The survey of industries—unorganised and organised, throws into baleful relief the ugly aspects of imperialist rule. The ruin of handicrafts which had once brought fame to the art and skill of pre-British India, the decline of cottage industries which imposed the unbearable burden of a surplus population on an unprogressive agriculture, the increasing unemployment of artisans thrown out of their business and left unabsorbed in organised industry because of its painfully tardy advance, the rapid growth of population demanding increasing quantum of food, clothes and houses and widening opportunities of work but meeting with disappointing response, the progressive ruralisation of population, were some of the striking results of the colonial policies pursued by India's rulers. The end of this rule left the *damnosa haereditas* of intractable problems against which it is the fate of independent India to struggle.

V. INDUSTRIALISATION

A general survey of the development of Indian industry in the first half of the twentieth century yields interesting conclusions which have a bearing upon the social and political movements of the times.

The advance in industries was considerable during the fifty years of the twentieth century, although it was not commensurate with the growing needs of the country and was dangerously slow considering the urgency of expansion of avenues of employment for the increasing force of the rural unemployed. The Government was indifferent to the serious problem of unemployment in the rural areas and in the pursuit of imperial interests either negligent or hostile to the Indian industrial needs. When obliged to change its attitude its response was either tardy or inadequate.

Yet, it was impossible for Indian economy to stand still. The new forces let loose affected Indian agriculture and induced a change from self-sufficiency in production towards commercialization. The ratio of non-food to food production which was 1:5 in 1893-94 increased to 1:2 in 1945-46. The increase in the production of cotton, for instance, led to the setting up of gins and presses, of wheat to flour mills, and so on.

The investment of foreign capital—mainly British, in various industries was bound to produce its effects in stimulating India's desire to emulate. The gradual extension of railways, roads and means of communication broke up the isolation of medieval India and created a large internal market. They also pushed India into the world market and the development of foreign trade.

Foreign Capital

It has been pointed out above that what is called Indian industry was in fact largely British industry carried on in India with Indian raw materials and Indian labour, and earning profits more for Britain than for India. The reason was that the capital invested, the entrepreneurship and technical skill in industry were predominantly British.

An analysis of the capital invested in joint stock companies registered in India shows:[17]

(In million Rs.)

Year	*No. of companies*	*Capital*
1913-14	2,681	760
1921-22	4,781	2,230
1929-30	6,606	2,650
1938-39	22,114	2,905
1946-47	21,853	4,717

In contrast the number of companies registered outside India and the capital invested in them were as follows:[18]

(In million Rs.)

Year	*No. of companies*	*Capital*
1929-30	841	10,710
1938-39	870	11,401
1946-47	834	10,860

Thus even in the last year of British rule in India the stake of the British in the corporate sector of Indian economy was more than double that of the Indians. It has been held that there were two reasons for this. In the first place, Indian capital was shy, and secondly, the investment of foreign capital in the early stages of a country's industrial evolution was extraordinarily large. So far as the first is concerned it will be discussed later in this chapter. As regards the second, it is true that in many cases industrial development in the initial stages was made possible by foreign investment, but as native industry advanced indigenous capital replaced foreign, which did not happen in the case of India.

Another aspect of the dominance of foreign capital in India was the role played by it to encourage certain trends. Much of the capital was employed in plantations, in jute factories, in coal mining and in railways; that is, in industries producing raw materials and in transport which controls trade—the export of raw material from India and the import and distribution of British manufactured goods in India. It stimulated economic development in some ways and inhibited it in others. But both stimulation and inhibition were in the interests of British economy.

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[17] Singh, V.B., *op cit.*, p. 223, note.

[18] *Ibid.*, note on previous page.

Industrial Management

The British stranglehold on industry was further accentuated by the managing agency system which was a form of organisation peculiar to India. But, unfortunately, "for the British businessmen, perhaps increasingly over time, the object was to do good business rather than to accelerate the progress of the country as a whole."[19]

The trend towards managerial integration of industrial units in selected industries is shown by the following figures: Seven British managing agents controlled in 1911, 102; in 1931, 133; in 1951, 163 units.[20]

According to Asoka Mehta, "the outstanding characteristic of our economy, as it has developed, is the concentration of control of industries in a few hands. A group of Managing Agents control about 500 industrial concerns with a capital of nearly 150 crores, and covering every field of industrial activity."[21] The concentration of control was heightened by interlocutory directorships, so that various trusts were interlinked by a group of common directors. A small number of individuals—both European and Indian, came to exercise control over banks, insurance companies, and investment trusts.

This process continued right up to the end of the British rule, although the place of the British was progressively taken by the Indian capitalists—Parsis, Gujaratis, Marwaris, and others.

Industrial Growth

How far the industrial growth of the first five decades of the twentieth century marked real progress in industrialization may be gathered from the statistics of employment in industry. Wadia and Merchant have shown that the proportion of workers engaged in industries to the total population declined steadily:[22]

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[19] Malenbaum, W., *Prospects for Indian Development*, p. 155, note.

[20] Wadia and Merchant, *op.cit.*, p.642.

[21] Mehta, Asoka, *Who Owns India*, pp.1-24.
(Jha., S.C., *Studies in the Development of Capitalism in India*, pp. 153ff.)

[22] Wadia and Merchant, *op.*`cit.`, p.146.

	1911	1921	1931	1941
Population (in millions)	315	319	353	389
Working Population (in millions)	149	146	154	170
Persons employed in industries (in millions)	17.5	15.7	15.3	16.3
Percentage of workers in industries to the working population	11.0	11.0	10.0	9.6
Percentage of industrial workers to the total population	5.5	4.9	4.3	4.2

J. N. Sinha points out that in the period 1901 to 1951 while the working force engaged in agriculture increased from 62.4 per cent of the total to 69.0 per cent, the working force outside agriculture declined from 37.6 per cent to 31 per cent.[23]

Urbanization

Another indication of the slow pace of industrialization was the growth of urbanization. Figures show that in forty years from 1901 to 1941 the increase in urban population was from 9.9 per cent to 12.8 per cent of the total inhabitants of the country,[24] that is, less than 3 per cent, while the population as a whole increased from 294.3 million to 389.0 million or by 32 per cent during the same period. Comparing the rates of growth of urbanization in India with the US, Davis concludes:

"A preliminary analysis of our comparative data suggests that India is moving ahead from given levels of urbanization much slower than did the more recently industrialized countries when they had similar levels."[25] The countries referred to are Germany, Japan and Australia.

If for purposes of comparison only the cities of over 100,000 population are considered, India in 1951 had reached the same density of urbanization, *viz.*, 6.8 per cent, as the US attained in 1855. In fact India's urbanization lag, compared to that of USA, continued to increase between 1891-1951. India was 55 years behind in 1891, 90 years in 1931 and 100 years in 1951.[26]

In his paper from which this quotation is made Davis places India in the fifty-second place among the countries of the world in industrialization, and points out that 57 countries were ahead in agricultural industry, fifty-one in urbanization, ninety-two in literacy and fifty-seven in per capita income.

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[23] Singh, V.B., *op. cit.*, p. 113.
[24] Anstey, V., *op. cit.*, p. 515.
[25] Kuznets, Moore and Spengler, *op. cit.*, p. 272.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 271.

India Compared with Other Countries

Another comparison between India's development with that of industrialized countries is furnished by Hoffmann.[27] He counts four phases in industrialization throughout the world since 1770. The first phase belongs to the period 1770-1820, the second to 1821-60, the third to 1861-90 and the fourth starts in 1891 and continues to the present day. He places UK, USA and Switzerland in the first period when their industrial revolutions started. During the second period a number of European countries developed their revolutions, *viz.*, Belgium, France, Germany, Austria, Russia and Sweden. The third period marks the entrance of Netherlands, Denmark and Greece in Europe, of Canada in North America and Japan in Asia into the revolutionary era. The real industrialization of some European countries, e.g., Hungary, of African countries like South Africa, of South and Central American countries—Brazil, Mexico, Chile and the Argentina, the Pacific countries—Australia and New Zealand, and Asian countries—India and China, falls into the last period.

The industrial evolution of these countries in the four periods is from (1) domination of consumer goods industries, to (2) a balance between consumer goods and capital goods industry, to (3) a tendency for the capital goods industries to expand more rapidly than the consumer goods industries.

Rostow has given a somewhat similar classification of advance.[28] According to Hoffmann's framework, India was among the batch of countries to join in the race of industrialization in the fourth period. However, most of the other countries which started their industrialization in the same period as India crossed over from the first to the second phase in the period ending 1950, only India, China and Mexico remained in the first phase. Australia and South Africa actually jumped into the third phase. The progress made by India did not alter much the ratios of output from consumer to capital industries. In 1891 industrial employment was divided between the consumer goods and capital goods industries in the ratio of 54.0 and 6.2 per cent. By 1947-48, the ratio had changed to 57.4 and 16.0 when the total employment in all industries was equal to 100. The net output of manufacturing industries in 1925 was 48.6 for consumer industries and 11.6 for capital industries, that is, the output of the former was 4.2 times that of the latter.[29] According to the first Report of the National Income Committee (1951), "the relative share of small and large enterprise in net output was roughly in the ratio of 5:1, that is, some 50 billion rupees of output are attributed to small enterprise (largely household enterprise), while only 10 billion rupees are attributed to larger enterprises (factories, railways, plantations, and the like)."[30]

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[27] Hoffmann, W.C., *op. cit.*, Chapter III, *The Historical Phases of Early Industrialization*, pp. 42-66.

[28] Rostow, W.W., *The Stages of Economic Growth*, Chapter 2.

[29] Hoffmann, W.G., *op.cit.*, p. 68.

Causes of Slow Growth

Economic historians have endeavoured to discover the causes of the industrial backwardness of India and the slow, rather futile, movement towards industrialization.

Natural Resources

Obviously India did not lack natural resources and they were not difficult to locate if there was a will to do so. There was no dearth of basic materials—coal and iron, and other minerals. There was a great potential of water-power.

Skilled Labour

The skilled workmen of India had won world fame in the past in the weaver's art and the manufacture of steel. But the traditional crafts were allowed to deteriorate, and the artisans not used in factory industry. It was not beyond the power of technical education and apprenticeship in actual industry to train up the requisite number, but technical education was neglected.

Capital

So far as capital for industry was concerned, it is held by some that wealthy Indians were insufficiently profit-minded or lacked entrepreneurial spirit to undertake risks; and in any case there was not enough capital available for investment in large-scale industry.

Shyness of Indigenous Capital

In regard to the availability of capital obviously there were two main sources—one indigenous and the other foreign. So far as the indigenous source was concerned the largest contributor was the Indian moneylender—*Mahajan* and *Zamindar*. This money was accumulated through surplus of profits from land, trade or banking. The surplus, however, was principally utilized in acquiring landed property in villages, real estate in towns, in hoarding precious metals and jewellery which was a safe investment capable of utilization when circumstances were adverse, and in extending moneylending operations which brought high interest—from 16 to 30 per cent and more.

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[30] Thorner, D., "Long-term Trends in Output in India, in Kuznets, Moore and Spengler, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

This capital kept away from the hazards and uncertainties of investment in industry mainly caused by the policies of Government. However, when in the middle of the nineteenth century large-scale consumer industries began to be established the capital was subscribed directly by the Indian entrepreneurs, their families and communities. This capital was derived from business—foreign and indigenous, by the merchants belonging to certain traditional business communities. D. R. Gadgil writes about them:

"The trading and financial castes had the resources and acquaintance with business techniques required to venture in fields opened by modern business. A small number of these castes, therefore, chiefly supplied and continue to supply, in the main, those who occupy the field not only in trading and finance but also the entrepreneurial role in modern manufacturing industry."[31]

Among these groups in western India the most prominent were the Parsis and after them the Gujaratis and later the Marwaris. The Bohras also belonged to these groups. Their success induced the princes, wealthy professionals and even landlords to participate in the development of industry.

In South India the Chettis—a moneylending community, and the Naidus who traded in cotton and engaged in processing business entered into the textile industry. In Bengal in the early stages landholders tried to take part in the plantation and coal-mining industries. But most of these individuals and groups had connections with British businessmen and in many cases they depended upon their goodwill.

The other source of capital, namely, the modern banks, was dominated for a long time by foreigners. The pioneers in the field were the Agency Houses of Calcutta and Bombay which were more interested in trade than banking. The Presidency banks were started by British capitalists with the patronage and support of Government. They were of no help to Indian industry. The Indian joint stock banks were founded in the latter half of the nineteenth century. But their numbers were small, and their progress slow. Their transactions were mainly limited to short-term loans which could not serve the purpose of supply of either fixed or working capital for industry. Thus before 1900 banking was in a more or less stationary condition.

Defects of Foreign Investments

Besides indigenous capital, all countries undergoing the process of industrialization depend in the early stages on foreign capital. Says Hoffmann, "Advanced foreign countries have in general contributed capital, technical knowledge and, above all, machinery to the new industrial economy of an agrarian country. This has happened in Canada, the South American republics, India, and to some extent, also in European countries (e.g. Italy)."[32] In the case of India there were at least two foreign agencies which could supply capital. The Exchange Banks and the foreign capitalists interested in establishing industries in India and working through Managing Agencies.

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[31] Gadgil, D.R., *op. cit.*

The Exchange Banks were, however, concerned with foreign trade and did not participate in industrial finance. Their operations were confined to exchange, movement of bullion and meeting credit requirements between rates and payment.

The Managing Agencies grew up in the nineteenth century. The agent was a person, firm or company who undertook the starting of new concerns, and promoting joint-stock companies. The agents either employed their own funds or arranged to provide funds by acting as guarantors. They acted as managers of businesses, suppliers of raw materials, stores and machinery, marketers of produce, etc. The Managing Agency system was begun by the British companies with their headquarters in London and then the companies established in India joined. In the nineteenth century the Europeans dominated the system. They attracted foreign funds required for industries in respect of both fixed and working capital. But their endeavours were mainly confined to industries like jute, coal, tea and cotton. They were also responsible for the trend towards concentration and centralization of business. Their methods for increasing their profits were not always above board. But although they succeeded in establishing profitable business they were not instrumental in the overall advance of industrialization.

If capital was, therefore, in short supply or largely engaged in promoting industries serving imperial interests, the fault cannot be laid at the door of any deficiency on the part of the Indian entrepreneur, nor even charged to a real lack of investable funds, but to the British politico-economic system. In the words of Malenbaum, "colonialism is not conducive to forward movement in the dependent state."[33]

VI. THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY DEVELOPMENT

With the advent of the twentieth century new forces began to operate in the world and in India. The British economic hegemony was challenged, then the two World Wars and the depression of the inter-war period administered blows to British economy and imperialist pretensions. In India the swadeshi movement gave an impetus to economy and awakened self-confidence. The stresses and setbacks of Britain provided opportunities to India, from which Indian economy benefited. The world-wide depression, which began in 1929 and brought great price fluctuations of primary products and terrible hardships to the cultivators, actually swelled the profits of the capitalists and industrialists. The policies of government also changed, *laissez faire* received a check and protective measures had to be introduced. British dominance in Indian economy started receding. The Indian middle class began to enter upon the inheritance of the British bourgeoisie. Industry of the consumer products grew rapidly, capitalist enterprise of the higher phase and diversification of industry made their appearance. Tatas, Birlas, Dalmias and Purushottamdas Thakurdases began to rub shoulders with Andrew Yules, Birds, Martin Burnes, Octavian Steels, Gillander and Arbuthnots, Shaw Wallaces and their kind.

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[32] Hoffmann, W.G., *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[33] Malenbaum, W., *op. cit.*, p. 162.

Growth of Indian Capital

Indian capital began to flow into industry. J.N. Tata was able to raise locally the entire capital for the construction of iron and steel works at Jamshedpur in 1912. £1,630,000 were collected in three weeks, every penny having been contributed by Indians. The working capital of £ 400,000 was subscribed by one Indian Prince, the Maharaja Sindhia of Gwalior.[34]

The progress of the Joint Stock Banks may be gauged from the increase in their number, the distribution of their offices and increase in their deposits. The total number of branches of banks quadrupled itself between 1916 and 1936 and more than doubled itself between 1937 and 1945. The deposits in all the banks rose from Rs. 34 crores in 1900 to Rs. 1,118 crores in 1947.

The Indian share in the general business of the country grew rapidly as the British declined between 1912 and 1948. In Bombay alone, the percentage of paid-up capital and gross assets of the concerns owned by the British went down from 30.8 and 43.0 to 8.9 and 3.6, while the Indian-owned enterprise increased its paid-up capital from 69.2 and its gross assets from 57.0 per cent to 91.1 and 96.4 per cent respectively.[35] "Today...it can be estimated that at least 95 p. c. of all modern enterprise in India is controlled by Indian interests."[36]

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[34] Wacha, D.E., *The Life and Work of J.N. Tata*, p. 202 (Jha, S.C. *op. cit.*, p. 176).

[35] Malenbaum, W., *op. cit.* p. 155.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 156.

Some Western Views about Industrial Stagnation Discussed

Some Western writers have sought to blame the religions, the social order—communal and caste grouping, and the joint family system for the slow pace of industrialization and the general stagnation of economy. Vera Anstey was of opinion that no rapid advance was possible "in the absence of fundamental social reorganisation" Among the social obstacles she mentions, (1) lack of restraint in the multiplication of population, (2) absence of the economic outlook, (3) existence of religious and caste hindrances to efficient production, to mobility and efficiency of labour and to economic expenditure and consumption.

According to her the religious attitude which pervades every sphere of life in India excludes the economic motive and is opposed to material and social progress. She remarks, "The religious tenets and practices of Hinduism and Muhammadanism have strictly limited economic development in the past and influence fundamentally future potentialities."[37] Again "caste which enforces social stratification has been an irremovable fetter on material progress, and is responsible for India's failure to adopt the technical changes introduced in the West, to develop industrial and commercial leadership, to promote the spirit of enterprise, to modernise the methods of production or to experiment with new methods, to prevent cooperation of members of different castes and to discourage waste in the sphere of consumption. Religious taboos limit the sources of food supply and forbid the destruction of animals and pests which cause immense damage. Religious ceremonies and rules lead to extravagance.

The joint family system blunts the edge of personal ambition and enfeebles the incentive to effort. It intensifies the forces of conservatism, preventing initiative and hindering social and economic changes.

In short, these customs and institutions tend towards overpopulation, improvidence, the checking of economic enterprise and the prevalence of a poor standard of mental and physical development."[38]

Western Views Controverted

These half-truths have been the stock in trade of European official and non-official apologists and vindicators of British raj since its foundation. Some of the vituperative utterances—especially those of the Christian missionaries have been mentioned in the first volume of this history. It appears their object was two fold: firstly, to accentuate the inferiority complex of their subjects and to implant in them a sense of their unworthiness for self-government; in the second place, they wanted to supply the sorely needed relief for their qualms of conscience and to throw a veil over the hypocrisy of imperialist exploitation. It is attempts like these which have earned for Britain the epithet *"perfide Albion"*. Pointing to this characteristic of the British Jawaharlal Nehru remarks:

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[37] Anstey, V., *op. cit.*, p. 47

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

> "Other peoples and nations have often behaved far worse than the British have done, but they have never succeeded, quite to the same extent, in making virtue of what profited them."[39]

The view that the Hindu religion emphasized the transitoriness of the world and enjoined abnegation of desires and renunciation of worldly goods or prescribed asceticism for all its adherents is exaggerated. It is based on an incorrect understanding of the Hindu religion and social system, both as prescribed in the books and as practised in life.

So far as the Hindu religious books are concerned they clearly lay down that the life of the members of the three upper classes should be divided into four stages, the first being the period of education, training and apprenticeship; the second of household duties and earning of livelihood through performance of caste functions; the third of retirement, meditation and spiritual exercise; and the fourth of renunciation of personal interests and of dedication to social welfare.

In practice few followed this plan of life. But the caste system, as practised, divided Hindu society into groups with hereditary occupations, and prescribed the actual economic functions of each—art, craft, trade or vocation. So that it will be a travesty of truth to hold that caste negated worldly economic activities; on the other hand, it positively enjoined the pursuit of gainful employment; in fact, made it incumbent on a member of the caste to perform the duties of his caste.

Nothing prevented the businessman belonging to the banker's caste to amass wealth and organise commercial enterprise on a large scale. History furnishes numerous examples of millionaire *seths*, who financed wars and issued bills which were honoured in all parts of India. Besides, it is well known that the caste regulations about occupation were in practice ignored in a large number of cases without invoking social disapproval. Take, for instance, the Brahmans who constituted between 6 and 7 per cent of the Hindu population. Their caste occupation, according to the laws of Manu, is teaching, study and priest-craft. In actual fact hardly more than 13 per cent are engaged in these pursuits. Brahmans served as soldiers in considerable numbers in the armies of the East India Company.

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[39] Nehru, Jawaharlal, *An Autobiography* (new edition, reprinted 1953), p. 376.

They are today in professions, besides being cultivators, cooks, peons, etc. The same is true of many other castes. According to the Census of 1931, only 45 per cent of persons were following their hereditary occupations. According to Davis, there are only three sections of the Hindus, more than half of whose members follow the traditional occupation, *viz.*, those in agriculture (91 per cent), trade and industry (51 to 70 per cent).

It may as well be pointed out that so otherworldly a religion as that taught by Jesus Christ and interpreted by the Roman Catholic Church in its days of glory did not prevent the Christian nations of the West to repudiate the Christian doctrines of renunciation, humility, poverty, the sinfulness of usury and pleasure-seeking, and to work for the acquisition of wealth, worldly goods and power.

So far as the social evils are concerned some were to be found among the higher castes, like prohibition of widow marriage, child marriage and female infanticide. But grosser superstitions were mostly prevalent in the lower orders. It is a historical fact that after the Revolt of 1857, the Government was too frightened to undertake their removal, in fact considered it politic to leave them alone. It took refuge behind the plea of neutrality in matters of religion and helped to perpetuate the customs and institutions which were reprehensible or otiose. The government of a people which refuses to remove hindrances to social welfare and economic advancement of its subjects proclaims by so doing its true character as alien and its unnatural inorganic relation with the people. It follows that the attitude of government was influenced by the desire to find allies who would strengthen its hold and, therefore, it naturally sympathised with the ultra-conservatives and reactionaries for the purpose. It sought to please them by a conservative policy of non-interference.

The fact of the matter is that social evils were used as an alibi for the real culprit responsible for industrial stagnation. What has happened in India since 1947? Although Hinduism and Islam have not disappeared from the land nor changed their character, nor have communal and caste exclusiveness vanished, nor have the limitations of the joint family system undergone any radical modification, yet both social and economic systems are showing dynamic trends. This furnishes abundant proof of the irrelevance of the argument. Alexander Gerschankron observes: "Adverse social attitudes towards entrepreneurs do not significantly affect the processes of industrialization unless they are allowed to become crystallized in governmental action."[40] Malenbaum who discusses the relation of social and cultural factors and industry in his book remarks:

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[40] Gersedchankron, A. *Social Attitudes, Entrepreneurship and Economic Development*. Quo in Bhatt, V.V., *Aspects of Economic Change and Policy in India*, 1860 960, p. 36.

"The more relevant observation is that in a relatively brief span of years, despite these cultural and religious factors and despite the relatively low status of business and trading groups in India's traditional class structure, there have emerged individuals and communities well attuned to modern industrial enterprise."[41]

Other Critics Discussed

Kingsley Davis in search of the depressor which slowed down the modernization of Indian economy picked upon growth of population as the most powerful factor, and a partially archaic social system as next in importance.

The first was of little consequence up to 1921, yet the opportunities for industrialization which appeared in abundance in the 19th century were not utilized. The argument that growth of population necessarily retards the pace and volume of industrialization is not convincing. Any addition to population means at once an addition to the working force and an enlargement of demand. Both these together ought, under proper conditions, to provide an incentive to production, though in adverse conditions when the rate of growth of population is higher than that of economic development, the addition will aggravate unemployment and the enlargement reduce the share of the individual in the national product. India's slow and feeble industrialization cannot, therefore, be attributed alone to the growth of population, but to the conditions which stood in the way of the proper utilization of increasing manpower. Davis recognises the possibility of a normal adjustment of growth of population and industrialization.[42]

The second factor, in spite of its conservative features, was not a necessary obstacle. Davis admits that "Hinduism is unusually favourable to the free expression of new ideas and opinions much more so than Catholicism or Islam, and because it obtains conformity in conduct by opinion rather than force, it permits variation in practice. So far as its belief system is concerned it shapes conduct no more than, for instance, Catholicism does in France. The belief system ...is of little or no importance in economic development now."[43] Then there are contradictory currents in Hinduism. Some, like the ascetic outlook, the reverence for the cow, the taboos against killing of animals, caste and joint family system, may hinder modernisation. But there are others which promote it. "Hinduism, among traditional religions, appears to be unusually malleable. It is eclectic, syncretistic, diverse, and tolerant of new opinions. It has no central authority or highly organised clergy. It is not an international community, and its host nation where 85 per cent of the people are Hindus, has had no trouble declaring itself a secular state."[44]

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[41] Malenbaum, W., *op. cit.*, p. 156.

[42] Davis, K. in Kuznets, Moore and Spengler, *op. cit.*, p. 284.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 300.

Indian View of the Causes of Stagnation

Having considered the wrong depressors it is now necessary to identify the right one. This is not difficult. Most Indian writers since Dadabhai Naoroji's *Poverty and un-British Rule,* R.C. Dutt's two volumes on *The Economic History of India under British Rule* and Ranade's *Economic Essays*—to mention the three leading exponents of the view in the nineteenth century—have laid the responsibility for India's backwardness squarely on the shoulders of the British Government.

Their twentieth-century successors have by and large endorsed their theses. Sir Ibrahim Rahimatullah, the Chairman of the Fiscal Commission of 1921, and four of his colleagues in their minority report frankly expressed the view:

"We believe that the industrial backwardness of India is in no way due to inherent defects among the people of India, but that it was artificially created by a continuous process of stifling, by means of a forced tariff policy, the inborn industrial genius of the people."[45]

Gadgil, a careful and cautious economist, says, "The economic policy of the state, owing to the circumstances of its origin, was largely negative."[46] Sir M. Visvesvaraya, one of the most eminent pioneers of industrialization in India, observed in 1942, "Government have no policy or plan, no unified conception of what they are doing or what they propose to do in a matter which gravely affects the purchasing power of 400,000,000 of our population."[47]

Wadia and Merchant's conclusion regarding the lag in large-scale industrial enterprise is, "We might well be excused if we looked for the causes of our economic and industrial backwardness in the then lack of power to control our own economic destinies."[48]

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[44] *Ibid.*, pp. 304-05.

[45] *The Fiscal Commission Reprt*, p. 148 cited in, Wadia and Merchant, *op. cit.*, p. 598.

[46] Gadgil, D.R., *op. cit.*, p. XV.

[47] Visvesvaraya, Sir M., December 1942, quoted by Wadia and Marchant *op. cit.*, p. 6.

[48] Wadia and Merchant, *op. cit.*, p. 433.

Some Western Critics of Government

Among European writers the Marxist school is fundamentally anti-Imperialist and Marxist writers have proved with a wealth of facts and statistics how British imperialism reduced the Indian to a colonial economy and prevented the growth of large-scale industry. R. Palme Dutt and J. Strachey are examples of this school.

But their conclusions are supported by a number of non-Marxist English and American writers on Indian economic history. William Digby in his *Prosperous British India* (1901) charged the British Government for the increasing poverty of India. Sir Guilford Molesworth, an English engineer, who had taken a prominent part in the development of Indian railways stated in a public meeting in London (1902):

"She (England) has persistently drained her (India's) resources, swamping her with English and foreign productions and instead of fostering her industries has handicapped them in every way.... Industries would never be introduced into India until they were protected, not only from foreign countries but from ourselves".[49]

Vera Anstey, discussing the causes of slow progress in industry, admitted: "The third fundamental obstacle to economic progress in India is the lack of cooperation between the Government and the governed." She adds: "The part played by the Government in the economic life of the country must necessarily be greater in India than in most other countries......Many of India's most pressing present-day economic problems are due to this connection (between India and England), and the Government ought, therefore, to assume at least part responsibilty for finding a solution".[50]

Griffith, another apologist of the British raj, admitted: "It would be equally wrong to give the British Government the credit for having deliberately planned or greatly stimulated the economic advance that has taken place".[51] He accepts somewhat grudgingly, "The change to a policy of qualified protection might with advantage have come a little earlier than it in fact did"[52]

Among the Americans D.H. Buchanan discussed the causes of the meagre advance in Indian industries so that only about two per cent of her population was supported by factory industry round 1934.

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[49] Buchanan, D.H., *op. cit.*, p. 468, quotes from the *Journal of the Society of Arts*, Vol. L, p. 353.

[50] Anstey, V., *op. cit.*, p. 477.

[51] Griffith, P., *op. cit.*, p. 476.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 468.

But in his attempt "to maintain a detached mind" he largely contented himself with stating the points of view of both the British Government and its Indian critics.

On the other hand, some of the more recent American writers have not been so inhibited. The opinion of Kingsley Davis has been quoted above. Some other remarks of his may be adduced. For instance, he says, "In fact, the economic policy of continued ruralism fitted perfectly the social policy of altering Indian institutions as little as possible. We begin to understand, then, why two hundred years of dominance by the country that invented and pushed furthest the Industrial Revolution produced in India a transition so low and feeble that not only was industrialization not accomplished but numerous obstacles (not all traceable to the indigenous social structure) were piled up in its way."[53]

Daniel Thorner in his article on "Long term Trends in Output in India" points out that over the years from the 1870s to the 1940s, the real change in the per capita income of India has been within small limits; although the total non-agricultural activity had been rising over the last sixty years. But its accurate calculation in default of precise data is not easy. He opines, "Some hold that in the twentieth century per capita income has been rising; others, that it has not been rising. There is a third logical possibility that per capita income has been declining. Until knowledge of India's economy and its evolution comes to rest on a more solid foundation, it would seem premature to rule out this third possibility."[54]

In the same volume Helen B. Lamb writes on "The State and Economic Development in India". She expresses the opinion, "While the government of India played an active, dynamic role in bringing about the revolution in transport and communication, it played a completely passive role in relation to the development of modern industry in India." She added, "India's rulers viewed with distrust the prospect of India's becoming an industrial nation." Again, "it is partly this fact—that a wide variety of miscellaneous institutions were planted somewhat helter skelter without reference either to the needs of economic development of the peculiarities of the Indian scene—which accounts for the impression one receives in studying India of a lack of organic relatedness between the whole and the part. India had the outer forms of many British institutions but not the inner core, the shadow but not the substance." And a last quotation, "British industry was still pressing as best as it could right up to the end of the British rule to prevent Indian industrial development in order to retain markets for British enterprise."[55]

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[53] Davis, K., in Kuznets, Moore and Spengler, *op.cit.*, p. 293.

[54] Thorner, D., in Kuznets, Moore and Spengler, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

Wilfred Malenbaum explains the causes of the slow growth of industries in India in these words: "They lie partly in problems of management and control and in finance; mostly, however, they are rooted in the fact that India was the colony of an important industrial and trading nation."[56]

These opinions do not stand alone. They have the support of eminent economists who have analysed the role of government in the development of industrialization, e.g. W.W. Rostow who describes the role of Government in the following words:

> "The Government must be capable of organizing the nation so that unified commercial markets develop; it must create and maintain a tax and fiscal system which diverts resources into modern uses, if necessary at the expense of the old rent collectors; and it must lead the way through the whole spectrum of national policy—from tariff to education and public health—toward the modernization of the economy and the society of which it is a part."[57]

Professor Arthur Lewis, Stanley Jevons Professor of Economics in the Manchester University, says:

> "Governments can have a notable effect on economic growth. If they do the right things growth is advanced. If they do too little, or the wrong things, or too much, growth is retarded.....
> Where this (British Empire) failed, economically, was in its devotion to *laissez faire*. In agriculture the peasants were not taught new methods or provided with new seeds or fertilizers; and in industry nothing was done to foster new manufactures and to see them through their growing pains. Hence the role of growth of total output was always slow, and hardly greater than the rate of growth of population, which other beneficial measures stimulated. Not all modern Empires have pursued this *laissez faire* policy."[58]

Says Colin Clark: "Protection is valid in the case of a country, a large proportion of whose working population is occupied in an overcrowded and unproductive agriculture, where labour will not flow to manufacture in the normal course of competitive enterprise unless such manufacture is first artificially built up to the scale where it yields increasing returns enough to enable it to compete with industry in other countries."[59]

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[55] Lamb, H. B. "The 'State' and Economic Development in India", in *Ibid.* pp. 486 and 494.

[56] Malenbaum, W., *op. cit.*, p. 155.

[57] Rostow, W.W., *op. cit.*, p. 30.

[58] Lewis, W. Arthur, *The Theory of Economic Growth*, pp. 408 and 413.

[59] Clark, Colin, *The Conditions of Economic Progress*, p. xi.

VII. THE REAL CAUSE OF STAGNATION

Laissez Faire

Among the policies of Government which retarded industrialization in India the first place should be given to the political and economic policies of the UK—*laissez faire* and free trade. Their regime began somewhere in the middle of the 19th century, by which time England had succeeded by its protectionist policy to build up a large textile industry, in spite of the two unfavourable factors: (1) that England had no raw materials for the industry, and (2) that the products had to be sold in distant markets entailing considerable transport charges. The policy succeeded by ruining the Indian domestic industry beyond repair.

The policy of *laissez faire* was foisted upon India. It has been suggested by some writers that this was done not out of any selfish design, but because the British administrators were genuinely convinced that the policy was in the interests of the universal good of mankind. It is, however, doubtful if such a plea will stand scrutiny, for it is a historical fact that the slogans of *laissez faire* and state non-intervention were in the nature of a battle-cry of the new industrial enterprise in England against the landed oligarchy. The objects were to secure cheap labour for industry by the free import of grain to keep the wages low and to attract labour from agriculture which was declining.

Nor is it quite true that the two philosophers whose ideas had a great vogue till about the last quarter of the 19th century were out and out supporters of non-intervention. Jeremy Bentham is recognised as the sponsor of the theory of individualism. In his earlier days he possibly followed Adam Smith in his view that individuals pursuing their own interests naturally collaborate in achieving an identification of their good. But later he came to argue that individual's interests must be *artificially* identified by the omnipotent lawmaker, on the basis of the felicitous calculus. Bentham became the advocate of state legislation in order to secure human happiness, and prescribed codes embodying principles of collectivisation.

John Stuart Mill, his pupil, who pleaded the cause of *laissez faire* and claimed that it was the pure milk of Benthamism, later developed into an interventionist. In his *Autobiography* he appeared as a liberal socialist; in *The Principles of Political Economy* he made concessions in his theory of distribution of wealth in favour of state interference; in the *Liberty* he expressed fears of democracy and apprehensions of the tyranny of society, and affirmed limits to individual freedom arising out of conditions of social life. In favour of protection he formulated the principle of 'Protection of Infant Industry'

Throughout the 19th century, the century of so-called *laissez faire*, the governments of England—Conservative and Liberal, continued to make laws interfering with economic freedom, e.g. factory Acts, poor law Acts, mines Act, Acts for arbitration of industrial disputes, defining employers' liability, laying down minimum wages and recognising trade unions. There were all kinds of regulations for industry to limit liabilities of joint stock companies, besides those which affected property and privileges of the Church. All this interference made W. Macmahon to exclaim, "*Laissez faire* is quite literally the only untried utopia."[60]

During the 19th century the policy of *laissez faire* paid rich dividends. England became the most advanced industrial country of the West—the workshop of the world and the centre of world finance. But as stated above, the intervention of the central government and the local authorities was quite substantial even in the early days and grew as the century advanced. As G.M. Young pointed out, "the regime of *laissez faire* had in fact been very brief; the pressure of state on the individual hardly felt in 1830, was beginning to be sensible in 1870."[61]

In the closing decades of the century with the passing of the Reform Acts and the growth of uneconomic activities like naval and military establishments and education, the pressure of public opinion began increasingly to demand governmental action to improve the economic condition of those who lacked resources to achieve security for themselves. Then in the closing years of the 19th century a new economic challenge to British supremacy was arising in the industrial development of USA and Germany. Early in the eighties demand for government assistance in securing new markets and countering the commercial policies of foreign governments arose. This culminated in the tariff reform movement led by Joseph Chamberlain early in the beginning of the twentieth century.

The war of 1914—18 accelerated the movement. In 1915, McKenna imposed new import duties. The Conservative Party had already adopted the principle of protective tariff and a system of imperial preference. In 1919, the imperial preference was tacked on to the McKenna duties. In 1921, the Safeguarding of Industries Act was passed. The policy of *laissez faire* and free trade was now dead and by 1935 it was buried without any hope of resurrection.

It is not possible in view of this history to maintain that Englishmen regarded *laissez faire* as the Kantian moral imperative from whose universal sway no deviation was possible or desirable. In fact even in India deviations were made as has been noted above. Profits of railway companies were guaranteed, plantation companies were given various kinds of aid and privilege, private British Banking offices established in India enjoyed the patronage of Government. But all these were businesses carried on by the countrymen of the rulers. *Laissez faire* was trotted out in regard to industries maintained or pioneered by Indians—the industries which ought to have been promoted in the interests of India and possibly also for bettering the trade of Britain itself. Rostow has pointed out that the most important pre-condition for sustained economic development is political.[62] According to Malenbaum, "the entire posture of administration must exude a confidence about the certainty of better times in the future,"[63] but the Government of India's behaviour was just contrary and a thick pall of frustration and pessimism was spread over the Indian scene.

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[60] The discussion is based on J.B. Brebner's article on "*Laissez Faire* and State Intervention in Nineteenth Century Britain", *The Journal of Economic History*, Supplement VIII, 1948.

[61] Young, G.M., *Last Essays*, quoted in Ashworth, William, *An Economic History of England, 1870-1931* p. 217, note 1.

The tariff policy of the Government which followed from the principle of *laissez faire* was the instrument by which industry was throttled. During its prevalence from the eighties of the nineteenth century till 1925 some British administrators did realize the need of Government initiative in encouraging the development of industry. The Famine Commission of 1880, the provincial governments of Madras and NWP (Uttar Pradesh) and the Industrial Commission of 1918, recommended assistance to industry, but they were either overruled by the Secretary of State or the suggestions were not heeded, or if accepted, given effect to in a half-hearted manner.

The verdict of Helen Lamb is: "Thus the traditional aim of developing India as a market for British manufactured goods in return for India's food and raw materials was achieved by the combination of an active state policy in the fields of transport, communication, and irrigation development with a passive state policy in the name of *laissez faire* with respect to industrial development. It was possible to achieve the old goal of mercantilism without imposing any restrictions of a mercantile character." [64]

Laissez Faire Abandoned

After the First World War the Government was compelled by circumstances to grant a small degree of economic autonomy. In 1921 the Fiscal Autonomy Convention transferred the right of determining the Indian tariff from the Secretary of State to the

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[62] Rostow, W.W., *op.cit.*

[63] Malenbaum, W., *op. cit*, p. 157.

[64] Lamb, H.B., in Kuznets, Moore and Spengler, *op. cit.*, p. 484.

Government of India, and a Fiscal Commission was appointed, at whose advice 'discriminate protection' was to be given to some existing industries on the recommendations of a Tariff Board. But "the new economic policy was a case of too little and too late,"[65] and its operation was 'tentative and piecemeal'.

India was soon caught in the whirlpool of world depression from which it could not extricate itself till about 1936-37. The devolution of the subject of industry to the Indian ministers in the provinces by the Constitution Act of 1935 produced little result, partly because the Indian ministries did not last long enough to go beyond the stage of framing schemes, but mainly because the provinces were assigned inadequate and non-expanding sources of revenue. But the real fact of the matter was that coordination or integrated planning so necessary for development was impossible under devolution. As Buchanan pointed out in 1934, "The encouragement of industry requires a far-reaching unified government policy concerning not only raw materials and methods of production but markets as well."[66] The Second World War brought the life of the ministries to an end, and during the pendency of the war although stimulus was given to some industries, especially those which contributed to the needs of the armed forces, no planned scheme to advance total industrialization was undertaken.

Other Policies of Government Responsible for Industrial Backwardness

(i) PURCHASE OF STORES

Apart from the dominant role played by the policy of free trade for over eighty years up to the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century, there were other administrative policies which hindered or curbed progress. Among them was the policy of purchase of stores for government requirements. The purchases of a Government ought to be used as a means for encouraging the industries of the country as was done in the case of Japan. Unfortunately, the British Government, right up to the end of World War I, bought its requirements for the army, for the civil works, telegraphs, telephones, and railways from England, causing a drain of hundreds of millions of rupees every year. The war compelled it to manufacture munitions in India and rely upon Indian material. The Industrial Commission Report (1918) suggested the desirability of establishing a Stores Department to encourage purchases in India. The Department began its career under the shadow of the Inchcape

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[65] *Ibid.*, p. 478.

[66] Buchanan, D.H., *op. cit.*, p. 464.

Committee report for retrenchment. It survived the axe but just limped along at snail's pace. During the seven years from 1928-29 to 1935-36, it had made purchases of wholly or partially made Indian goods to the tune of Rs. 15.6 crores.[67] During the same period Government imported stores worth over Rs. 400 crores[68] from England. From 1935-36 a more generous policy was followed, railway stores, materials for construction of bridges, etc., came on the list, and purchases from England gradually diminished. The comment of Buchanan on the policy was "the Indian Government took a far narrower view of its obligations, leaving Indian business severely alone. It could have done much in this way to the ultimate benefit of both itself and the people."[69]

(ii) INDUSTRIAL FINANCE

The policy regarding banks was also not in the interest of industrial development. Bank and finance corporations in countries like Germany and Japan have fostered industry. But it was not so in India. The Presidency banks were established by means of European capital aided by Government. They enjoyed the monopoly of Government transactions. They were prevented by regulation of 1868 from dealing in foreign exchange, and lending money for more than six months or on the security of immovable property. Thus they could give no assistance to industrial enterprise.

The exchange banks in India were branches of foreign banks and interested mainly in financing foreign trade, and had little interest in Indian industry.

There were few indigenous banks till 1900, but their progress was chequered. In the crises of 1913-17, 1922-36, and later many small banks foundered. In any case the main business of the Indian joint stock banks was to attract deposits, finance trade, make short term advances on reliable security, discount bills of exchange, and underwrite movement of goods from the interior to the ports and *vice versa*. None of these functions was directly concerned with the expansion of industry. Thus, industry was deprived of the support from funds at the disposal of banks.

(iii) CURRENCY

The management of Indian currency has been another cause of grievance to Indian industry. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century India whose currency was based upon silver, found itself in difficulties as the value of silver continued to fall, with the result that prices began to inflate. The Government of India, finding the pressure upon the exchange ratio of the rupee in terms of gold increasing, requested the Secretary of State to appoint a committee to consider the situation.

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[67] Banerji, P.N., *Indian Economics* (1951), p. 524.

[68] *Statistical Abstracts*, 1938-39, p. 744.

[69] Buchanan, D.H., *op. cit.* p. 473.

In 1893 the Herschell Committee was appointed. On its recommendation the Indian mints were closed to the free coinage of both gold and silver, allowing Government the authority to coin silver. The closure of the mints was intended as a first step towards the introduction of a gold standard and a gold currency. The transitional step, however, did not satisfy the commercial community, and so in 1898 another committee was appointed under the chairmanship of H. R. Fowler to advise on the establishment of a system which would secure stable exchange between the UK and India.

On its report the Government made gold sovereign and half sovereign legal tender at fifteen rupees to the pound, while keeping the silver rupee unlimited legal tender. But the British treasury opposed the opening of a gold mint. The stringency in currency, however, obliged Government to resume minting of silver on a large scale.

In 1900, a Gold Standard Reserve was formed out of the profits of the coinage of rupees partly to prevent fluctuations in exchange, partly to meet the expenses incurred by the Secretary of State and to pay the Home Charges and partly to provide necessary funds in London to purchase silver for coining. The rate of exchange was fixed at 1s. 4d. to a rupee. The Governments of England and India bought and sold exchange at the official rate by the issue of council bills by the Secretary of State in England and Reverse Councils by the Government of India. This mechanism kept the value of the rupee stable in exchange, and thus safeguarded the interest of Government and the British officials.

In 1913, the Chamberlain Commission set the seal of approval on this gold exchange standard. Before, however, the various recommendations of the Commission could be given effect to, the war broke out and dislocated the Indian currency and the exchange position. There were great fluctuations in the price of silver, which rose from 27 pence an ounce in 1915 to 89 pence an ounce, pushing the rupee to 2s. 10d. on 12th February in 1920. But then a reverse process began soon and the price of silver started going down, till in 1923 the rupee was equal to 1s. 3-1|8d.

The violent fluctuations led to the appointment of the Babington Smith Committee which fixed the exchange rate of the rupee at 2s. This led to speculation and the Gold Standard Reserve was depleted. India incurred a loss of Rs. 35 crores in this foolish gamble.

This upset compelled Government to constitute in 1925 a Royal Commission under the presidentship of Hilton Young. The Commission found a number of defects in the Gold Exchange standard hitherto followed. They recommended the scrapping of the standard, the establishment of a Central Bank for control of currency and exchange, and the institution of the gold bullion standard. But one of the recommendations which aroused great controversy concerned the fixation of the rupee at the rate of exchange at 1s. 6d. gold.

Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas, a member of the Commission, in his minute of dissent pointed out that the ratio would place a heavy strain on Indian economy as it would raise prices of India's exports by 12-1|2 per cent, and impose a heavy burden on a large number of agricultural products. It would encourage imports and discourage exports, and turn the balance of trade against India. These arguments were advanced with great vehemence by the Indian critics against the Government, who made it a serious political issue. The slump which followed in 1929 made the situation worse and the new ratio was largely blamed for the economic distress in the thirties, involving the export of gold from India on a large scale—from September 1931 to January 1940 worth more than Rs. 350 crores. Unfortunately, this drain of the accumulated savings of generations represented the "distress gold" extracted from the pocket of the poor peasant who had to part with his savings. The reason for the sale of his gold was that the sale of the produce at the catastrophically reduced prices after 1929 (by 60 per cent) did not yield enough money to meet the demand of the landlord, the moneylender and the Government. The tiny trinkets which embodied his investment against adverse times had therefore to be parted with in order to make up the deficiency in the exports.

(iv) RAILWAYS

The railways are a powerful auxiliary in the development of industry, besides their other important functions and indirect benefits. In various countries the railway policy is deliberately determined to advance industrialization, for instance, in Germany and Japan. This aspect of the railways is so well recognized that it does not require emphasizing. Even so early as 1853 when India was beginning to lay out railways Marx recognized that the system was "truly the forerunner of modern industry."[70]

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[70] Marx, K., *Articles on India*, pp. 70-71.

But the rulers of India were not interested in the development of Indian industry, and they pursued railway policy for different purposes. Hardinge in 1848 supported railway development for the facility of rapid concentration of troops and supplies, the prevention of insurrection, efficient prosecution of war and the security of the Empire. Dalhousie, however, considered the utility of railways as a means of opening out markets in India for British manufactured goods and of promoting the export of raw materials from India.

Besides, railway construction gave a profitable opportunity for the investment of British surplus capital as the private companies which were entrusted with construction were guaranteed by Government interest of 5 per cent on capital invested.

During the nineteenth century the policy about railway ownership kept changing. But with the turn of the century a spurt took place in railway expansion, the mileage increased from 24,752 in 1900 to 34,656 in 1914.

The First World War had, however, a depressing effect and in 1920-21 a committee under the chairmanship of Acworth enquired into the various aspects of railway management. Its main recommendations were: (1) the nationalization of railways and ending the management and ownership by the private companies, (2) the expansion of the Railway Board and extension of its authority, and (3) the separation of railway finance from the general public finance.

The adoption of these recommendations by the Government brought in a period of prosperity, and the expansion of the mileage to nearly 42,000. But the world depression had an adverse effect which continued for several years. In 1936 the Wedgwood Committee was appointed to effect improvements in the working of railways and to secure a sound and remunerative basis for its finances.

The improvements soon resulted and continued during the Second World War so far as the economic aspect of the railways was concerned. But the maintenance of the stock was neglected.

It has already been pointed out that the working of the railways was designed largely in the interests of Britain. The railway rates policy was so devised as to benefit British interests. In the early days the principal aim of the British Company to run railways was to earn profits. Hence the rates were manipulated with this aim, so that the import of British manufactured goods and export of Indian raw material were favoured. But so far as Indian interests were concerned they were discriminated against by charging unfair rates on raw materials moved from the regions of supply to places of manufacture and *vice versa,* on the plea that short distance transport was more expensive than long distance hauls. The block system was another device used with similar objectives. The ports were given specially favoured treatment with the result that industry tended to concentrate there. The hinterland was neglected and industrial development hampered.

Although the main object of railway development was neglected, there were a number of by-products which were of great importance. In the first place, the consolidation of the country was promoted. The different regions which for lack of inter-communication tended to remain isolated were united and the concept of one country and one people was strengthened. Railway travel increased contacts between peoples of different provinces, and multiplied opportunities of mutually influencing one another, thus removing differences and advancing the process of assimilation. Rapidity of locomotion intensified social mobility, which powerfully aided in the growth of the national consciousness.

The railways assisted in the stimulation of production, they helped in the commercialization of agriculture and the development of internal and external trade.

(v) PUBLIC FINANCE

Since the character of public finance is a fair index of the Government's policies—administrative, social and economic, it is necessary to consider the budgets of the Government of India in order to discover the light which they throw upon the Government's attitude towards industrialization. The budgets of the first twenty years of the twentieth century are of no help in this matter as during this period the Government followed the policy of *laissez faire,* and except for the indirect effects of its measures, industry was not directly an object of its concern.

After the First World War, a change occurred in the opinion of the rulers with regard to extending protection to industry. The budgets of the inter-war years from 1920-21 to 1938-39, however, show an amazing degree of constancy without indicating any worthwhile provision for aid to industry. The annual revenue and expenditure of the Government of India and the provinces varied slightly round about Rs. 215 crores. The revenue of the Government of India alone was Rs. 115.2 crores and its expenditure Rs. 142.8 crores in 1921-22, while its revenue and expenditure in 1938-39 amounted to Rs. 121.07 crores and Rs. 121.71 crores. The expenditure on industries charged to both imperial and provincial revenue was on the average about Rs. 50 lakhs a year during the twenty years, except after the enforcement of the new Constitution of 1935.

The main items of expenditure (imperial and provincial) were—(1) Debt service, (2) Defence Services, and (3) Civil administration. In 1921-22 out of the expenditure of Rs. 148.54 crores the share of the three came to Rs. 130.06 crores or nearly 80 per cent; in 1938-39, the total expenditure of the Central Government out of the Revenues was Rs. 121 crores, the expenditure on Debt services was Rs. 14 crores, on Defence Rs. 52 crores and on Civil Administration Rs. 17 crores, that is, altogether Rs. 83 crores, or nearly 70 per cent. So far as the nation-building activities were concerned, about Rs. 24 lakhs were spent on education, Rs. 22 lakhs on medical relief and less than Rs. 14 lakhs on public health, that is, less than Rs. 60 lakhs all told.[71] But as these departments were on the provincial list the main part of their expenditure actually fell on the provincial budgets. Industries were transferred by the Act of 1935 to the provinces, in 1939-40 the total expenditure on them approximated to about Rs. 1 crore per annum.

It is clear from these facts that till almost the end of British rule, Government did not make any worthwhile effort to promote Indian industries. While the Finance Members of the Government of India complained of the inelasticity of revenues and were constantly worried by the deficits in their annual budgets, it does not seem to have occurred to them that the two main problems of public finance were, (1) how to expand the sources of national wealth in order to augment the revenue of Government, and (2) how to economize on the unproductive expenditure which weighed so heavily upon Indian economy. The warning of Indian leaders who urged the need of industrial development and pointed out the unfairness of excessive expenditure on the army, the civil administration and the debt charges, were not heeded. Hence the vicious circle was established, no surplus for agricultural and industrial development, without which there was no increase in national wealth and, therefore, no funds were available for expenditure on schemes of industrial growth.

About the short-sighted policies of the Government concerning economic development Vera Anstey remarks:

"In the case of agriculture (for which more has been done by the Government than for any other economic interest) the expenditure of the state per head or per acre has been extremely low in comparison with other countries, as is shown in the following table:

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[71] *The Statistical Abstracts*, 1938-39, pp. 302, 306 and 308.

State Expenditure on Agriculture

	per 1,000 of population	per 1,000 acre of cultivated land
	Rs.	Rs.
Germany (1900)	945	705
USA (1919-20)	1,020	210
United Kingdom (1921)	960	1,380
The Panjab (1921-22)	74	56

The expenditure upon industries is still more meagre. Undoubtedly increased expenditure upon agriculture, industry, public health, and education, if well conceived and well administered, would eventually prove financially productive."[72]

VIII. Trade

International foreign trade constitutes the third important sector of national economy. Foreign trade plays a vital role in the economic life of a country, for the trade has a dual aspect—internal and external.

The development of the internal economy and production of a country may determine the nature and direction of its exports, or the demands of foreign countries may determine the development of the internal economy. The first alternative is applicable to countries which enjoy freedom and therefore are masters of their own affairs, the second applies to countries which are dominated by foreigners, and whose economy is subordinated to the interests of the dominant power.

India belonged to the second category. Indian foreign trade was dependent upon its predominantly agricultural economy. It was mainly a producer of primary goods or raw materials. It shared this characteristic with a number of other countries; some of them were tropical countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, others were either European countries or their colonies mostly situated outside the tropics. In a majority of them Great Britain enjoyed the advantage of special treatment secured by quotas, tariff preferences or favourable trade agreements.

The countries of the second group were characterized by a low average standard of life. Their production for exports was under foreign control and their value of export trade per head of population was comparatively small. The countries belonging to the second group were more or less autonomous politically and economically, their standards of living were higher and their per capita export large. In the first group foreign trade had a smaller stake than in the second.

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[72] Anstey, V., *op. cit.*, p. 401.

The position of India which belonged to the first group was the lowest, so far as the per capita value of exports was concerned. For in the first group the value varied from 2.7 old gold dollars for French West Africa to 64 for Malaya; in the second group the variation was from Greece with 7.4 dollars to New Zealand 98.

India had the unenviable distinction of enjoying a per capita value of 1.2 dollars. These statistics refer to the year 1937. The difference between the two groups reflects the higher per capita national income of the second. India's low value of exports was an indicator of its backwardness as a manufacturing country.

Although India's range of commodities for export was fairly wide, the nature of the commodities made them liable to violent and simultaneous fluctuations in prices, which rendered the structure of export trade unstable.

The backwardness and stagnation of India's industry and agriculture are partly the effect of its external trade which moulded into shape the productive mechanism of the country.

Foreign Trade

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 marked an extraordinary expansion of the foreign trade of India, from about £90 million (Rs. 90 crores : £1 — Rs. 10) in 1868-69, to about £200 million (Rs. 300 crores : £1 — Rs. 15) in 1913-14. Before the great depression of 1929 the figure exceeded £400 million (Rs. 604 crores: £1—Rs. 15). The depression had an adverse effect upon the trade, reducing it to £200 million (Rs. 321 crores: £1—Rs. 15), but by 1946-47 complete recovery had taken place and the trade stood at nearly £400 million (Rs. 608 crores: £1—Rs. 15) again.

The noticeable characteristics of the trade were:

(1) the excess of Indian imports from UK over exports to UK from India;

(2) the development of the multilateral system of foreign trade, which enabled India to meet the cost of excess of imports from UK by the excess of exports to countries other than UK. After the first World War the multilateral trade system broke down for a variety of reasons and gradually bilateralism took over.

(3) The consistent record of export surplus called the favourable balance of trade which has imposed unilateral transfer of funds on the country.

The continuous excess of exports over imports from 1870 to 1939 (except the two years 1920-21 and 1921-22) is extraordinary. In normal exchange of goods the imports and exports ought to balance over a period of years. But in India's case the balance was never struck.

A unilateral transfer of funds from one country to another may be occasioned by,

(1) payment of a political tribute;
(2) liquidation of indebtedness arising out of war debts or capital development loans;
(3) meeting the external financial obligations of the Government, such as debt charges, pensions, railway securities, etc;
(4) payment for the import of capital goods, such as machinery and stores.

Such transfer turns the terms of trade against the country making the transfer and forces it to exchange a larger quantity of imports. The consequence has been, "the growth of India's export trade has imposed a disproportionate burden on the agriculturists and forced them to sell 'non-paying' crops like cotton on unfavourable 'real' terms of exchange."[73]

From the point of view of the growth of economic independence of India two tendencies were striking. There was a change in the nature of the goods which comprised the trade. The change in imports and exports between 1938-39 and 1945-46 is shown below:[74]

	1938-39 (per cent)	1945-46
Imports :		
Food	15.7	9.3
Raw Materials	21.7	48.5
Manufactures	60.8	40.6
Exports :		
Food	34	22.5
Raw Materials	45	26.5
Manufactures	29.3	46.0

These figures clearly point to the growing production of manufactured articles in the country, although they also show that even in the last year of British rule the industrial exports had not reached the fifty per cent mark [75]

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[73] Ganguli, B.N., *Reconstruction of India's Foreign Trade*, Chapter 1

[74] Jathar and Beri, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

Direction of Trade

The second tendency was the gradual change in its direction. Before the First World War, UK supplied 63 per cent of Indian imports and received 25 per cent of India's exports. In 1939-40 the imports from UK to India had fallen to 25.2 per cent but exports to UK had risen to 35 per cent. A further decline occurred by 1945-46, while imports from UK remained steady at 25 per cent, exports to UK fell to 28 per cent. The reduction in imports was largely in cotton textiles, iron and steel machinery, hardware, and paper. So far as exports were concerned, tea, jute manufactures, hides and skins, and oilseeds showed increases, while foodgrains went down considerably. India's economic dependence upon Britain was evidently showing signs of abatement. Other countries like Japan and the United States of America were successfully competing with Britain and shaking her monopoly. While UK's pre-war average in total foreign trade of India fell from 40 per cent to 30.8 per cent in 1938-39, the average of Japan rose from 5.5 to 8.8 and of USA from 5.2 to 11.1 per cent.[76] In 1945-46 the position of USA was slightly better than that of UK in as much as imports were 28 per cent and exports 26 per cent of the total.[77]

Balance of Trade and Home Charges

It has been pointed out in the Second Volume of this history that long continued and consistent surplus of exports over imports was a peculiar phenomenon of India's external trade. Specially was this the case of trade between India and the United Kingdom. It consisted of two sets of items. One set related to the Home Charges. Stores, debt charges, annuities, pensions and expenses incurred by the Government on India Office, were the main items on the first list. The second list consisted of invisible items—services of banking, insurance and shipping companies, profits of foreign enterprises like plantations, jute manufacture, mining, private remittances, etc.

Some of these items of export were payments on account of material received by India, by the others were unrequited exports from which India did not receive any equivalent material or immaterial return. From 1913-14 to 1933-34 the gross amount of the Home Charges is tabled below:[78]

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[75] Banerji, P.N., *op. cit.*, p. 575.

[76] Jathar and Beri, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

[77] *Ibid.*, p. 184.

1913-14	£20,311,673
1918-19	£23,629,495
1924-25	£31,888,776
1928-29	£31,558,715
1929-30	£31,558,715
1933-34	£28,862,177

These figures include payment on account of stores, interest on Government loans for financing railways, irrigation works, etc., payments in respect of civil and military services, military expenditure on account of imperial wars, etc.

Apart from these the export surplus included, (1) payments in the form of interest and profits on the foreign capital invested in India without Government intervention, (2) payments to foreign bankers, shipping and insurance companies, etc. for services rendered, but not recorded.

The Indian balance of trade with UK gradually diminished as the following figures show:[79]

1913-14	Rs. 59 crores
1929-30	Rs. 36 ,,
1932-33	Rs. 11 ,,
1933-34	nil
1936-37	Rs. 16 ,,
1937-38	Rs. 12 ,,

The percentage share of the United Kingdom in India's total trade in merchandise only is given below:[80]

	Imports	*Exports*	*Total*
(1) Prewar average (1909-10)	62.8	25.1	40.0
(2) War average (1914-15 to 1918-19)	56.5	31.2	41.2
(3) Post-war average (1919–20 to 1923-24)	57.6	24.7	39.5
(4) 1938-39	30.5	34.3	32.5
(5) 1939-40	25.2	35.1	30.8

The conditions during the war were peculiar and need not be taken into consideration.

Obviously the near monopoly of Britain in the foreign trade with India, especially in India's imports contracted in subsequent years and then other countries, such as Japan, USA and Germany made inroads into the trade, establishing a multilateral system and reducing India's dependence on UK.

The continuance of the export surplus which included a considerable amount of unrequited exports reduced to that extent the availability of funds for economic development in India, and benefited the economy of UK.

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[78] Jathar, G.B. and Beri, S.G., *Indian Economics* (eighth edition), Vol. II, p. 197.

[79] Ganguli, B.N., *op. cit.*,, p.

[80] Jathar and Beri, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

It is true that on the whole the growth of foreign exports promoted the commercialization of agriculture, influenced the development of the plantation industries—tea, coffee and jute, and stimulated mineral production, but the lion's share of the profits of these enterprises was enjoyed by the British. It acted as a restrictive factor in the development of heavy industry.

Only after the tariff policy was changed and discriminating protection was extended to industry that in addition to cotton and jute, textile industry, iron and steel, chemicals, cement and sugar started developing, extenuating the adverse effects of the balance of trade.

Internal Trade

Though the external trade of India is important, its internal trade both in volume and value is considerably larger. According to the Economic Inquiry Committee Report, "if India's total agricultural produce is taken into account, calculations show that for every acre of land producing goods, whether grain, oilseeds, fibres, tea, etc., for export, eleven acres are cultivated for local consumption."[81] Besides there is the non-agricultural production—minerals and manufactures, which considerably augments the total.

Unfortunately, the figures of this trade are not at all in a satisfactory state. Until 1923, the statistics of import and export in staple articles were published in a Government compendium "Inland Trade (Rail and River borne) of India". This did not give figures for trade carried by road. The publication was stopped in 1923, and then in 1933 the Government began a new series, "Accounts relating to the Inland (Rail and River borne) Trade of India". The statistics relate to quantities and denominations, but money values are not given. It is difficult to base any sure conclusion on such incomplete data. But the statistics of quantities of inland trade in certain important articles from 1937 to 1944 show a considerable increase. An examination of the gross earnings of state-owned railways shows that between 1928-29 and 1943-44, the earnings rose from Rs. 99.61 crores to Rs. 185.49 crores.[82]

It is difficult to determine the ratio of the internal trade to the external trade. One estimate puts it at 5:2.[83] In any case the volume was bound to be large. The estimate of foreign trade in 1928-29 is of the order of Rs. 600 crores. If the above ratio is anywhere near accuracy the internal trade could not have been less than Rs. 1,500 crores. Thus there is little doubt that with the increase in the means of transport and communication and the growth of rail and road mileage, considerable impetus was given to the movement of goods.

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[81] *Economic Inquiry Committee Report*, p. 13.

[82] Jathar and Beri, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 198.

[83] *Ibid.*, p. 199.

IX: Industrialisation and Social Change

How did tne industrial advance affect the Indian social system? It had two noticeable consequences. One was the creation of a class of the industrial proletariat. In the earlier part of this chapter it has been pointed out that in the nineteenth century the conditions of industrial labour in India were not very different from what they were in the early stages of the Industrial Revolution in England—long hours of work, low wages, insanitary and overcrowded housing and employment of women and children in inhuman conditions of drudgery.

In India the industrial labour was provided by the superabundant army of landless agricultural labourers in the villages. A considerable proportion of the workers in factories, mines and collieries, however, retained at first their connection with the village. Later on a truly industrial proletariat grew up which was settled in towns and about the coalfield mines.

The average number of labourers daily employed in factories rose from 542,000 in 1902 to 2,275,000 in 1947, that is, more than four times. But taking all the industries into consideration the percentage of workers in industries to the working population as well as the total population fell.

The percentage of industrial workers was low, which indicated that industry was not providing alternative employment to the surplus agricultural population. Between 1921 and 1945 the index number of wholesale prices went up from 179 (Calcutta) and 198 (Bombay) to 289 (Calcutta) and 219 (Bombay, 1942). But the index of daily wages from 1926 to 1942 fell from 100 in Jharia coal mines to 72, and in C.P. manganese mines to 86.[84] The all-India index numbers of cost of living, money and real earnings, 1900-1938, are given below:[85]

Year	Cost of living	Money earning	Real earning
1900	100	100	100
1900—1909	97	107	111
1910—1919	143	135	98
1920—1929	207	211	103
1930—1938	143	184	129

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[84] Subramanian and Homfrey, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-77.

[85] Wadia and Merchant, *op. cit.*, p. 495.

Although these figures cannot be regarded as absolutely trustworthy and therefore they do not provide data for certainty of conclusions, they are useful as showing trends. They show a tendency on the part of money wages to rise, and of the real wages to decline as compared with cost of living. The effects of such a situation on the living conditions—nutrition, health, housing, working conditions—may not be ignored. P. N. Banerji says :

"The effects of inadequate consumption on production is immense. Ill-fed, ill-clad, ill-lodged, the mass of the people of India lead a dull and dreary existence, the physical deterioration of the people goes on increasing from generation to generation; and with the progress of physical degeneration, their moral stamina also tends to become less and less strong. Consequently, the efficiency of labour as a factor in production has a progressively rapid tendency to diminish." [86]

X. NATIONAL INCOME

The account of development in the three main factors of economy, *viz.* agriculture, industry and trade, exhibits the differential character of the evolution of Indian economy under British rule—improvement in the condition of the upper class and setback in that of the masses. Is it possible to prove this from the calculation of national wealth and its distribution between the two sections of the population during the two centuries of British rule? For if it could be done with some exactitude there would be no better demonstration of the economic consequences of that rule.

Unfortunately scientific accuracy in making the calculations of wealth and income evades the calculator's grasp. For the first hundred years (1757—1857) the paucity of data is so great that only guesswork is possible. For the latter half of the nineteenth century there is some improvement in the supply of facts, but it is not enough for arriving at reliable conclusions. For this period a number of estimates of national income do exist, for example, the estimates of Dadabhai Naoroji for the years 1867-68, of William Digby for the years 1882 and 1899, and of F. J. Atkinson for the years 1875 and 1895. These estimates have been found faulty inasmuch as the calculations employed were defective both in method and facts. In the twentieth century the situation becomes better; more statistics and more reliable statistics become available.

But even for this period the data are not as ample as necessary, for there exist gaps and uncertainties and therefore there is room for conjecture.

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[86] Banerji, P.N., *op. cit.*, p. 209.

Apart, however, from data, the methodology, coverage and concepts dealing with them differ, for there are several approaches to the calculation of national wealth or dividend. Some prepare their estimate on the basis of the output of the various factors of the economy, others consider it more feasible to do so by considering the national expenditure, and still others the income accruing to the contributory factors. Then there is a combination of two or more methods.

The result is that not only estimates of different economists differ for the same year, their conclusions regarding trends over a number of years vary. In view of the fact that divergences affect even the figures for such highly advanced countries as the United Kingdom, this is not surprising. For example, the three estimates of UK for the year 1914 are as follows :

Sir L.G. Chiosza-money	£16,000 million
Mr. Edgar Cranemond	£16,400 ,,
Sir Josiah Stamp	£14,300 ,,

Mr. Mukherjee[87] has listed over forty estimates for India, but hardly any two of them seem to agree. The first of these is contained in the Budget Speech of Lord Curzon, 1901, and covers the whole of India. The other calculations by Indian and British authors, for the years from 1901 to 1949-50, all tell a different tale. Even where there are two or more estimates for the same year, they are divergent, for instance, for the year 1911, there are three estimates of Rs. 989 crores by F. A. Horne, of Rs. 1,920 crores by G. F. Shirras, and of Rs. 539 crores (for 1911-12) by Balakrishna. The income per head per annum according to the three enquirers was Rs. 178, Rs. 339 and Rs. 89 (in terms of 1948-49 prices). Sir B. N. Sarma quoted the figure of Rs. 86 for 1914 in the Council of State of 1921.

For the year 1948-49 there are two estimates, namely, that of the Ministry of Commerce of the Government of India and that of the Final Report of the National Income Committee appointed by the Government of India in 1949. They refer to the Indian Union, that is, India excluding Burma and Pakistan. The figures are Rs. 7,059 crores and Rs. 8,650 crores for the national income and Rs. 277 and Rs. 247 for individual income.

A serious difficulty in ascertaining the long term trends of income is the fact that most of the estimates tabulated by Mukherjee are point estimates, that is, they relate to a particular year; and because of the differences in the methods of calculation of the different estimaters, they do not lend themselves to the charting of the curve of income over a span of years.

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[87] Mukherjee, M., "A preliminary study of the growth of National Income in India, 1857-1957", in *Asian Studies in Income and Wealth* (1965), pp. 82-85.

In view of these difficulties it is not possible to speak with certainty about the trends of national income. The serial estimates computed by some writers which are given in the following table illustrate :[88]

Years	*Patel*	*Arora & Iyengar*	*K. Mukerji*
1905–06 to 1915–16 . . .	100	100	100
1916–17 to 1925–26 . . .	103.9	125	110
1926–27 to 1935–36 . . .	98.3	132	112
1936–37 to 1945–46 . . .	91.1	138	112

While Arora and Iyengar's estimates suggest an upward advance of 38 per cent in about as many years, Mukerji stands for a small advance at rather slow speed. According to Patel, however, the income took an actually downward course during the period 1905-06 to 1945-46.

K. Mukerji's conclusions have been questioned by Bhatt who has argued that Mukerji overestimated the rate of growth of income from professions, domestic services, house property, 'other commerce' and 'small enterprises' "and if the over-estimation involved in his estimation procedures is allowed for, the rate of growth per capita income would be much less." [89]

One conclusion which is quite obvious is that the per capita income, calculated in terms of constant prices at 1948-49 rates, from Curzon (for 1901) to the First Report of the National Income Committee (for 1950-51), although varying between Rs. 89 (Balakrishna for 1911-12) and Rs. 339 (G. F. Shirras for 1911) was lamentably low. It is not difficult to prove that the figures like those of Balakrishna or Shirras are exaggerated.

Even if these estimates are eschewed, doubts about the trend are not wholly resolved. An eminent economist like Colin Clark reviewing the figures of per capita real income per annum, at 1939-40 prices, holds that between 1939-40 and 1947-48 there was almost continuous decline. In 1939-40 the income was 200 O.U. and in 1947-48, 185 O.U. [90] Clark sums up the situation in these words :

"It appears that from a very low level in the nineteenth century, real income per head rose rapidly up to 1931, but has subsequently not even quite succeeded in maintaining the level."[91]

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[88] Mukerji, K., "A note on the long-term growth of National Income in India 1900–01 to 1952-53". See Vol. II, *vide* Bhatt, V.V., *Aspects of Economic Change and Policy in India*, 1800–1960 (1963).

[89] Bhatt, V.V., *op. cit.* 5, p.2.

[90] Clark, Colin, *The Conditions of Economic Progress* (1960), p. 203.C; Calculations based on the computations of the *Eastern Economist* and R.C. Desai).—I.U. stands for the International Unit, and O.U. for Oriental Unit. (See Clark, *op. cit.* Chapter II).

His Table XLIV shows that the decline between 1931-32 and 1939-40 was from 218 O.U. to 200 O.U. But in the previous years, that is, from 1868 to 1931-32 income per head rose from 103 to 218 (*vide* Table XLV). The low figures for the nineteenth century are accounted for by the fact that from the beginning of the 18th century to the middle of the nineteenth century "India passed through a shocking period of war, anarchy and bloodshed, and a great decline in the level of economic productivity." [92]

With regard to the earlier centuries he asks, "Was this very low nineteenth century level that which had always prevailed?" and replies, "There is a good deal of evidence that it was not, but that at an earlier date real income had been a good deal higher. This is not surprising."[93]

The average monthly income in O.U. of the Mughal period and the British times is given in the following table: [94]

	Akbar	*Jahangir*	1895	1953
Unskilled farm labourers	67	87	24	48
Watchmen, urban labourers	101	131	32	55
Carpenters	203	262	57	82
Superior skilled workers	236	284	78	97
Highest palace staff	—	400	—	—

R. C. Desai calculated that the per capita consumer expenditure at 1938-39 prices actually fell by Rs. 3.6 from Rs. 49.9 to Rs. 46.3 during the period 1931-32 to 1940-41.[95] His conclusions were, (1) "It was quite probable that national income per capita was not rising as was generally believed," (2) "The most serious cause for concern was that the consumption of food, except for variations caused by the freaks of nature, was steady while population was increasing so rapidly, thus giving rise to a situation worse than contemplated by Malthus." [96]

It is interesting to compare this conclusion regarding India's annual per capita income with the gross taxable income per assessee as an indicator of per capita income. Bhatt has furnished the data for the years from 1886 to 1947 and beyond. After making necessary adjustments for inter-temporal comparisons, prices and fluctuations in tax limits, etc. he finds, "the gross taxable income per assessee declined by about 50 per cent between 1886-90 and 1938-41 and by about 65 per cent between 1886-90 and 1948-49.[97] And his conclusion is, "it is quite likely that this decline in the gross taxable income per assessee may have been partly due to some decline in the per capita income during this period."[98]

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[91] *Ibid.*, pp. 204-05

[92] *Ibid.*, p. 206.

[93] *Ibid.*, pp. 205–6.

[94] *Ibid.*, p. 207.

[95] Desai, R.C., *Standard of Living in India and Pakistan* (1953), p. 284.

[96] *Ibid.*, pp. 285-6.

For the present purpose, however, it may be taken for granted, that Patel and Bhatt are possibly wrong and the latest estimate that of M. Mukherjee is probably correct, or nearer probability, and that the average per capita income for overlapping nine year periods increased from about Rs. 199 to Rs. 255 (at 1948-49 prices) during the long span of years between 1896-1904 and 1941-49. But even Mukherjee thinks that the per capita income grew over the first quarter of the twentieth century, then remained almost steady up to the second World War and then declined. His words are : "On the whole, we get a slight rise over the half century with periods of growth, stagnation and slight decline."[99]

How deplorable the plight of India has been under British rule, even if Mukherjee's conclusion about rise in income is accepted, is revealed by a comparison with other countries of the world. Colin Clark's table No. XIX[100] shows that India's real income per head per annum in the terms of O.U. for the year 1950 was between 100 and 150 O.U. The computed figures for the other countries were:

In Africa of all the countries (computed) seven have income below 150 O.U.—two are in the group of 100 to 150, and 8 above 200; in North, Central and South America, Haiti alone is below 200 O.U. ; in Europe no country; in Oceania only one, *viz.* British Oceania and New Hebrides; in Asia 4 countries are below the 150 line, four are included in the 150-200 group, and ten are above 200 O.U. limit. Thus of sixty countries listed, only fourteen have income below that of India, seven are in the same group with India and the remaining thirty-nine are above India.

Even more enlightening is the Table VII which presents the information regarding world net income from manufacturing production in million I.U. It may be summarized as follows :

For the period 1905 to 1948, India's production rose from 293 to 876, or nearly 300 per cent; Japan's from 1905 to the beginning of the World War II, from 343 to 2,835 or 826 per cent; Australia's from 1905 to 1948 from 150 to 1,020 or 680 per cent and Canada's from 1905 to 1948 from 497 to 2,794, that is, 562 per cent.

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[97] Bhatt, V.V., *op. cit.*, p. 26 and Table 3 (pp. 21, 22).

[98] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[99] Mukherjee, M., in *Asian Studies in Income and Wealth* (1965), p. 101.

[100] Clark, Colin, *op. cit.*, Table XXI to face p. 257.

More important than the question of total national or per capita income is the problem of the distribution of income among the different sectors of economy—agriculture, industry, commerce and services. Unfortunately, the difficulties of such an analysis are even greater than those of estimates of national wealth. It is, however, important to have at least a broad understanding of this kind in order to intelligently follow the movement for independence.

The total population of the Indian Union, that is, India without Pakistan, increased from 235.5 million to 314 million from 1901 to 1941. The number of workers in the same period increased from 117.2 million to 122.4 million. They were distributed between the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors in the following ratios :

1901	62.4 : 37.6
1941	69.6 : 30.4

The actual numbers of agricultural workers rose from 73.1 million to 84.9 million, but of non-agricultural workers fell from 43.9 million to 37.4 million. The value of agricultural output per worker went down from 105 to 103 and per capita from 20 to 15. If these figures are correct they show an unmistakable downward trend in the principal sector of economy,[101] namely, agriculture.

In support of this conclusion some corroborative evidence may be considered.

Agricultural Sector

During this period the man-land ratio shows decrease in acreage per person. Between 1890 and 1940 while the total population of all India (inclusive of Pakistan) increased from 285.3 million (1901) to 379 million (1941), that is, 36 per cent, the net area under cultivation rose from 201.2 million acres (1907-8 to 1916-17) to 206.8 million acres (1936-37 to 1945-46),[102] that is, less than 2.8 per cent. The index of crop production (food) fell from 100 in 1883-84—1895-96 to 99 in 1906-7—1915-16 and 93 in the period 1936-37—1945-46.[103] The index of commercial crop production during the same periods rose from 100 to 120 and to 185, and that of total production from 100 to 104 and to 110. So that crop production as a whole increased by 10 per cent as compared with the population increase of 36 per cent, but food production lagged far behind. In fact the decline in foodgrain output per capita was 29 per cent for the period 1911 to 1941 or 1.14 per cent per year.[104] It was only the increase in non-food crop output which, to some extent, compensated for the downward trend in food production, so that for British India, during 1911-41 all crop output per capita showed a decline of .72 per cent per year.[105]

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[101] The figures are taken from the article of Sinha, J.N., "Demographic Trends" in Singh, V.B., *op. cit.*; and Davis, Kingsley, *op. cit.*,

[102] Blyn, G., *op. cit.*, p. 129.

[103] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

When the figures of output are considered along with the increase in the number of, working force in the agricultural sector and the quantity of the crop raised, a clearer idea of the conditions of the population engaged in agriculture is obtained.

The total working force in India, exclusive of Pakistan, increased from 117.2 million to 122.4 million from 1901 to 1941, that is, by 5.2 million or 4.4 per cent, the number of workers in agriculture increased from 73.3 million to 84.9 million or by 11.6 million or about 16 per cent. The percentage of agricultural workers as compared with the total working force rose from 62.4 to 69.6 or just over 11 per cent. The area under cultivation grew from 174 million to 201 million, that is, about 16 per cent between 1901-02 to 1941-42.[106]

This area was divided between food growing and non-food growing crops. In 1901-02, 146 million acres were used for food crops and 28 million for non-food crops. In 1941-42, the acreage had grown to 162 million for food and 38.6 million for non-food.

Thus, although the area under food crops increased by about 11 per cent, the value of the yield increased from Rs. 6,139 million to Rs. 7,317 million, that is, 12 per cent. On the other hand, the acreage of non-food crops rose by more than 36 per cent and the yield from Rs. 2,184 million to Rs. 3,411 million or by 56 per cent. While the total area under cultivation of all crops showed a rise from 174 million acres to 201 million acres, or about 16 per cent, the total yield rose from Rs. 8,383 million to Rs. 10,279 million or about 12.4 per cent.[107]

The yield of food crops and all crops together did not keep pace with the increase of the population—considered either in the totality of numbers or the strength of workers in agriculture, especially those engaged in the production of food, who were in a large majority. The output of all crops fell in value per head of population by 15 per cent and food by 25 per cent.[108]

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[104] *Ibid.*, p. 102.

[105] *Ibid.*

[106] *Ibid.*, pp. 316-17 (Appendix 4C) and pp. 349-50.

[107] *Ibid.*

[108] Singh, V.B., *op. cit.*, p. 116.

These statistics endorse the conclusion that the economic condition of the majority of the people of India, *viz.* those dependent upon agriculture, was deteriorating or at best not improving in the first half of the twentieth century.

Non-Agricultural Sector

On the other hand, the picture presented by the non-agricutural sector is not so gloomy. In fact, though the progress of industry was halting for the first quarter of the century, it acquired some speed in the second quarter. On the assumption that the contribution of the agricultural sector to the national dividend was stationary if not actually dwindling, and that the total was increasing, however, slowly, it seems obvious that the increase must have been due to a rise in the income from the non-agricultural sector—mainly industry, trade, and transport. Davis remarks, "t would seem, then, that the growth in productivity of the total economy has come from a certain amount of industrialization, from commercial stimulation and better distribution machinery."[109]

There are a number of indicators which confirm this conclusion. In the first place, the progress of urbanization itself indicates some advance in industry. The urban population of India was 10.1 per cent in 1901, but it went down to 9.4 per cent in 1911; by 1941, however, 12.8 per cent of the population was living in towns of more than 5,000 inhabitants. The gain was distributed over all classes of cities—with 5,000, 10,000, 25,000, and 100,000 or more inhabitants. This urban growth was not the result so much of natural causes as of migration from villages which was motivated by the lure of better wages in given in the following table:[110]

The growth of industrialization is borne out by the figures of imports and exports of raw materials and manufactured goods as given in the following table:[111]

	Before 1914		1940–41	
	Exports	*Imports*	*Exports*	*Imports*
		(per cent)		
1. Food and Raw Materials . . .	76	22	55	41
2. Manufactured Articles . . .	23	76	45	57

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[109] Davis, K., *op. cit.*, p. 212.

[110] *Ibid.*, Chapter 15.

[111] *Ibid.*, p. 213.

The result of this was the growth of an industrial proletariat in the industrial towns. The development of skill among the labourers helped to ameliorate their wages and to improve their social status.

It is difficult to accurately estimate the progress of non-agricultural activity, although it may not be doubted. N. A. Khan prepared an index of industrial production on the basis of a few major industrial products and came to the conclusion that the index rose from 40 (1914-15 to 1923-24) to 133.9 (1939-40 to 1946-47), while the combined index of agricultural and industrial production during this rose by 8.5 points only.[112]

Another useful though imperfect indicator is the income tax. In this case the increase or decrease in the number of assessees during the period of half a century throws light on the trends of non-agricultural incomes. Unfortunately, a complicating factor in the estimates is the change in the exemption limit from time to time. Even then the number of income tax payers does indicate, after making allowance for the exemption limit, the trend of income in the non-agricultural sector, especially in view of the fact that agricultural incomes were entirely excluded from income tax. V. V. Bhatt has compiled the figures of numbers of assessees and of exemption limits (at 1952-53 prices) from 1886 to 1958, more or less quinquennium wise. In the quinquennium 1896-1902 (nearly 7 years) the exemption limit was the low figure of Rs. 2,100 ; the number of assessees per annum was 495,000. The number of assessees in spite of increasing exemption limit was on the upward grade from 1896-1902 to 1936-41, reaching the figure of 1,700,000 in the last period in spite of the higher limit of Rs. 6,920. The war years affected the number of assessees and when the limit of exemptions was reduced to Rs. 3,000 in 1944-46 the number of assessees came down to 1,298,000. However, the gross taxable income rose from Rs. 303 crores per annum in the period 1896-1902 to Rs. 726 crores in 1944-46.[113]

There is another pointer to the increasing differentiation in the distribution of income between the wealth-producing sectors. If the ranges of income per year and the total income in each range are taken into consideration, it becomes evident that both the numbers of incomes as well as the totals show comparatively larger increases in the higher ranges, than in the lower as the following table indicates:[114]

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[112] Singh, V.B., *op. cit.*, p. 118.

[113] Bhatt, V.V., *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22.

Ranges of income per year	Number of Incomes (1938)	Number of Incomes (1948)	Total (1938)	Total (1948)
			(Rs. in millions)	
1. Up to 4,999	182,234	261,122	505	818
2. 5,000 to 9,999	55,038	112,763	222	798
3. 10,000 to 14,999	16,913	38,692	151	471
4. 15,000 to 24,999	10,691	25,902	141	495
5. 25,000 to 49,999	5,622	15,2261	115	607
6. 50,000 to 99,999	1,091	4,922	10	376
7. 100,000 and over	436	2,452	91	594

It is not a far-fetched conclusion to hold that much of the increase in various ranges was due not to growth of agricultural but of industrial and commercial incomes.

But the evidence of the increase in income from manufacturing production is more helpful. Colin Clark, in his table of World net income from manufacturing production (1860—1953) gives the figures for India in millions of I.U. According to his five-yearly averages the income rose from 184 million I.U. in 1895—1900 to 836 million I.U. in 1948, taking 1925—29 as the base with 509 million I.U as the average annual net income.[115]

All these statistics tend to support the conclusions stated above, namely, that (1) the value of agricultural product per capita was falling, and (2) that the per capita income from industry and commerce was slowly rising. The implications are that during the first half of the twentieth century the great majority of the people of India, *viz.* those dependent on agriculture were becoming progressively impoverished, while the small number of those deriving their livelihood from industry, trade and certain services were enjoying increasing income. Not only was per capita income of these growing, their numbers were also increasing.

This development had a great significance for the political struggle. Till the end of the nineteenth century the masses—the mimetic majority, and the classes—the creative minority, lived in two almost separate worlds. But with the turn of the century the two began to come closer. The masses groaning under their misery sought some means of relief from hunger, fear and thraldom. The classes needed mass support to bring pressure upon Government for the removal of grievances—the policies which obstructed the development of industrialization, debarred Indians from higher services and evinced little interest in the advance towards self-government. The middle class with increasing numbers and affluence extended their influence among their countrymen—urban and rural, intensified national solidarity and helped to build up the force of public opinion and to organize the instruments for carrying on the struggle.

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[114] Wadia and Merchant, *op. cit.*, p. 752.

[115] Clark, Colin, *op. cit.*, Table VII, facing p. 335. I.U. is defined as the quantity of goods exchangeable in USA for 1 dollar over the average of the decade 1925-34 (p.18).

Appendix–A

QUANTITY OF PRINCIPAL IMPORTS (1)

Imports	1913-14	1918-19	1928-29	1934-35	1945-46
Cotton :					
Raw (1,000 tons)	12	2	36	61	861
Yarn & Twist (million lbs.)	41	34	50	34	123
Piecegoods (million yds.)	2,616	1,810	1,752	943	3
Iron & Steel goods (1,000 tons)	808	423	992	370	48
Sugar (1,000 tons)	634	472	798	223	35
Mineral oil (million gallons)	90	82	209	200	1,131

(1) Anstey, Vera, *The Economic Development of India* p. 534 and *Statistical Abstract for the year* 1949, pp. 1658-59.

Appendix–B

VALUE OF PRINCIPAL IMPORTS (IN LAKHS OF RUPEES)(1)

Imports	1913-14	1918-19	1928-29	1934-35	1945-46	
Cotton	54,70	52,83	72,99	27.04	23,03	
Iron & Steel*	12,48	10,11	19,07	6,38	1,62	*This includes Metals also
Sugar	13,17	14,70	16,37	2,11	.038	
Mineral Oil	3,94	4,23	10,14	6,16	7,85	

(1) Anstey, Vera, *op. cit.*, p. 534 and *Statistical Abstract for the year* 1949, pp. 1658-59

Appendix–C

QUANTITY OF PRINCIPAL EXPORTS (1)

Articles	1913-14	1918-19	1928-29	1934-35	1945-46
Cotton:					
Raw (1,000 tons)	430	391	610	615	136
Twist & Yarn (1.000.000 lbs.)	192	129	31	12	15
Piece-goods (1,000,000 yds.)	90	156	71	57	457
Jute—Raw (1,000 tons)	764	464	768	752	338
Grain, Pulse & Flour (1,000 tons)	4,411	3,141	2,967	1,765	55
Oilseeds (1.000 tons)	1,453	708	1,191	875	394
Tea (1,000.000 lbs.)	266	322	347	324	356
Hides & Skins and Leather (1,000 tons)	50	57	56	40	33
Metals & Metal Manufactures (1.000 tons)	52	72	593	631	30
Ores (1,000 tons)	619	495	679	515	462

(1) Anstey, Vera, *op.cit*, p. 536 and *Statistical Abstract for the year* 1949, pp. 1670-73

Appendix–D

VALUE OF PRINCIPAL EXPORTS

(In lakhs of rupees) (1)

Articles	1913-14	1918-19	1928-29	1934-35	1945-46
Cotton	44,68	45,35	81,47	37.64	45,99
Jute	42,45	52,99	86,22	32,34	15,84
Grain, Pulse and Flour	45,81	37,41	41,79	11,84	20.48
Oilseeds	24,36	12,17	27,63	10,54	12,93
Tea	13,06	17,54	29,72	20,13	34,82
Hides & Skins (Leather)	14,60	17,07	16,02	8,61	8,33
Lac	2,20	2,57	7,11	3,30	4,21
Metals & Manufactured Metal Goods	54	82	5,37	3,19	14
Wool & Woollens	2,94	4,10	5,34	2,19	5.19
Ores	1,14	1,89	2.53	2,72	3,12
Opium	9,96	2,16	1,81	7	2
Oil (Mineral & Vegetable)	91	1,87	1,55	55	17

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(1) Anstey, Vera, *op.cit.* p. 536 and *Statistical Abstract for the year* 1949, pp. 1670-73.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND

I. INTRODUCTION

Antagonism between two groups of people, one of which dominates and rules and the other is dominated and ruled, is inherent and unavoidable, especially when the dominating group is foreign. The policies, measures and manners of the rulers may exacerbate or extenuate the antagonism but cannot in the nature of things eliminate it. The attitude of individuals and even parties is unable to affect to any considerable extent what is intrinsic to this inorganic relation whether of short or long duration. It must end either by the fusion of the two groups or the extrusion of one. In the case of India and Britain the first was impossible and the only alternative was the removal of British rule.

At the commencement of the twentieth century the antagonism was subdued, but as the century advanced the antagonism became open, sharp and keen. Indian pressure on Britain grew more exigent and oppressive. On the other hand, Britain's capacity to withstand the pressure correspondingly diminished. Above all, world developments helped India.

As has been pointed out in a previous chapter, during these five decades the United Kingdom was travelling down the arc of descent from the zenith of world empire to the status of little England. At the same time the constituents of the British Empire were climbing up to sovereign equality, the colonies and territories to unrestrained independence. India which was the largest, the most populous and the highest prized of the imperial domains, was becoming impatient and restless for freedom.

The social, economic, political and ideological changes which had occurred in India in the nineteenth century had some curious consequences. Social differences were toned down, but inter-communal relations were worsened. The class structure which varied from region to region tended to uniformity if not examined too closely. The old aristocratic ruling class had been wiped out or rendered impotent. It remained in a decrepit state as the princely order, composed of rulers of large states like Hyderabad and Kashmir and tiny principalities of

Kathiawar, and was utterly dependent upon the sovereign authority. The millions inhabiting the hundreds of thousands of villages were politically impassive and mentally stagnant, immersed in poverty, illiteracy and disease and oppressed by government officials, landlords and money-lenders.

The middle class, a product of the British Raj, was mainly comprised of three sections—agricultural, industrial and professional. Among them there were many grades, but they constituted the most dynamic part of Indian society. Each section had its own special interests although among them a community of aims existed and there was growing a consciousness of nationality and a sentiment of patriotism which was the result of both material and psychological needs. The class was not a closed hereditary caste and was not bound by any traditional laws. But its components recognized communal and caste obligations, which tended to interfere with their loyalty to the nation.

The mantle of the medieval ruling class fell upon the shoulders of the new middle class, which naturally spearheaded the struggle for independence.

The development of Indian economy has been treated elsewhere. The conclusion of the discussion is that in the nineteenth century, especially in its latter half, Britain became an imperialist power with a highly industrialized base. Its economic policies were formulated in the interests of Britain's imperialist needs. Although it did not gain much success in imposing these policies on the Dominions, the colonies and territories like India were shamelessly exploited. A colonial economy was established in India, which resulted in the evolution of a lop-sided differential economy.

The results were increasing poverty of the masses engaged in agricultural pursuits, thereby accentuating the conflict between the landholders and tenants. In a province like Bengal where the majority of the landholders were Hindus and that of the tenants Muslims, this conflict acquired a communal bias. In varying degrees depending upon the proportion of Hindus and Muslims among landlords and peasants similar attitudes became manifest.

Other factors including the policy of the Government, competition for services, economic and educational inequalities, cultural and religious diversities, irrational and vague fears, jealousies and apprehensions and lack of understanding on the part of the leaders of the majority and the minority—pride and prejudice—exaggerated the discords.

These differences were not abnormal, as similar differences existed in other countries of the world, but the presence of the third party wielding the instruments of overwhelming power acted like a catalytic agent separating and isolating the elements and preventing them from combination.

Politically a radical transformation had occurred. The medieval political order and the concepts on which it was founded, had completely disappeared. The traditions of limited sovereignty exercised by hereditary monarchs liable to dynastic revolutions were wholly forgotten. Tribe, clan and family which were politically important, and autonomous village republics which had provided stability and continuity during the disturbed conditions of foreign invasions and conquests and internal upheavals, had lost their vitality and functional utility.

As politicization expanded in depth and extent the old diversities of socio-religous systems invaded the field of politics. They were exploited and magnified by imperialist designs.

In the sphere of thought and culture the penetration of westernism was considerable. The consequences were diverse. The highly educated acquired the scientific and critical attitude and methods. But they used them for different purposes. Most Indian thinkers tried to reconcile the basic principles of the ancient Indian thought—regarded as spiritual and intuitive and therefore superior, with the objective and sense data based approach of the west which was depreciatingly called materialist. They were obliged to make the accommodation because the wonderful success of the Western methods demonstrated in the amazing development of science and technology, wealth and power, could not just be ignored.

In this sphere, too, change was uneven. Among the educated there were different degrees of sophistication. Some of the philosophers, scientists and literary men of India took their stand with the high ranking representatives of the west, but a large number, even of university-trained men, were only superficially equipped. Most had a dual personality—traditionist at home and modernist in public.

Unfortunately the uneducated formed the large bulk of the Indian population. They had scarcely emerged from medievalism. Custom, superstition and a gross form of credulity governed their behaviour. They could therefore be easily excited, especially on issues connected with tradition and custom.

The rulers also suffered from their peculiar obsessions. The British or Anglo-Saxons looked upon themselves as the cream of the white race, the elect of the human kind. They considered the brown peoples of India as an inferior race, inferior in intellect, in character, in practical ability and the art of self-government. It was their conviction that Indians were so divided by race, religion, language and culture as to preclude the possibility of their ever forming a nation, from which they concluded that self-government for such peoples was unthinkable and it was necessary for Britain to govern India "as if... for ever". They had persuaded themselves that the educated Indian was a contemptible creature. The Hindus who were politically minded and affiliated to the Congress were more than a nuisance; they were rebels—open or incipient.

The Muslims, though inferior to the whites, were considered somewhat superior to the Hindus, and because they were afraid of the majority and sought the protection of the rulers, worthy of favourable treatment.

The Hindu leaders of the non-communal outlook believed in secular nationalism. They believed in one India and one Indian nation. They were sure differences in language, custom and religion were irrelevant so far as politics were concerned, and they had no doubt that the minorities had no real cause for fear of harm to their cherished beliefs, their culture and modes of worship from the majority group. The two had common interests—political and economic. They thought that special rights, weightages and separate electorates promoted the disintegration of an organic whole and the fragmentation of the nation. They tended to underestimate the genuine anxiety of the Muslim community regarding their destiny. As they had not studied the problem of the minorities of other countries and the reports of the Minorities Commission of the League of Nations they never considered the problem with the seriousness it deserved.

The attitude of the communal-minded, insular and short-sighted Hindu leaders was unhelpful. They were as afraid of the Muslims as the Muslims were of the Hindus and for no understandable reason. The spectre of a past created by a fervid imagination having little relation with reality seemed to frighten them, and even the three to one majority gave them no confidence in their future. The action and reaction between the two set up a vicious circle.

The Muslim mind was in a peculiar state of ferment. For a long time disfavoured and ill-treated by the Government they had developed the mentality of the persecuted. Everyone seemed to be against them. They felt isolated, misunderstood, under-valued, yet they dreamed of the glories of the past—of the piety and graciousness of the righteous Caliphs, of the swift expansion of Islamic empire, of the wonderful conquests in the domains of art, literature and science. They were once sovereign of greater part of India. They naturally yearned for an opportunity to play a prominent role in India which was evolving. They naturally wished to hitch their wagon to a star which would brighten their path towards the goal of prosperity and power.

Obsessed with jealousy of the Hindus who had made greater progress in education, affluence, services and professions, they were working up their fears and jealousy complexes, afraid that in any democratic set-up they would be overwhelmed by the Hindu majority. Reason and argument fly out of the door when passion and prejudice enter. Yet politics are not a little swayed by impulse and feeling. Statesmanship consists in facing and overcoming them.

The third party exploited these fears and obsessions. They gave recognition to the separate interests and to the historic importance of the Muslim community and thus encouraged their separatist tendencies; on the other hand, they blamed Indians for the communal and cultural discords which negated their claim to be a nation. Morley did not think it desirable or possible or even conceivable to adapt English political institutions to the nations which inhabited India. The policy of separate electorates, based on denial of nationalism, did not change even when British representative institutions were conceded in 1919 and 1935.

What with prepossessions and obsessions of different kinds the situation was extraordinarily complex and a miracle alone could straighten it out. Among the pushes and pulls in contrary directions there was, however, one significant point on which almost all factions and parties converged to agreement, namely, the demand for complete independence.

The struggle for independence was not a narrowly limited movement for political emancipation. It was broadly an endeavour to reconstruct an old, static, collective society and to establish in its place a modern dynamic organization for the promotion of such values as liberty, justice, individualism, humanism and secularism. The object was to exchange the new bonds of association for the old ones—territorialism, secularism, and nationalism for tribalism, regionalism and communalism. The task was colossal, especially in view of the extraordinary obstacles which stood in the way of progress.

The history of freedom movement is, therefore, not a simple narrative of the incidents which happened on the stage of politics, but an essay in understanding the rationale of the total process of social evolution—both the emergence and propagation of new ideas, as also the clash of interests and forces ranged on the contending sides. The history has to be viewed in the background of world developments and of changing conditions in the United Kingdom and India. The vicissitudes of the movement were the result of the interaction of these three—India, the United Kingdom and the world.

The state of Britain which forms the backdrop to the drama has been dealt with in a separate chapter, and the economic background of the Indian movement in another. The following chapters seek to explain the growth of the ideas which constituted the ideological basis of the movement, and provided inspiration to the fighters for freedom. The Indian leaders were aware of the need of revolution in the political status of India, but at the same time they were deeply concerned with the basic problems of the form and character of their future free society and their new culture. The question of social reconstruction was, therefore, discussed in its depth and that of culture from the view point of the consequences of the impact of the west on the traditional and the emergence of the modern. Indian independence was not regarded as a matter of bread and butter alone. but far more as a search for the new ideals of life. In short. the question was what was the Indian to live and die for.

The war against foreign domination had, thus, two aspects—that of force and that of ideas. The war had to be fought both on the material and moral planes, it was as much a war with an external enemy as a battle within the mind.

It is therefore necessary that the history of freedom movement should be both a narrative of the facts of the political struggle as well as an exposition of the thought processes and philosophies of the chief guides of the struggle.

The ideologies of these leaders have identities and diversities, for they are particular expressions of deep thinking and wide ranging minds seeking solutions of the great problems which faced their country. So, on the one hand, they devised the tactics for the campaigns of the struggle, on the other, they deliberated upon the national and moral justification of ends and means.

The two-fold search for freedom within and without is not unusual. All great human uprisings have shown similar dual features. The French Revolution of 1789 was preceded by the philosophies of Voltaire. Rousseau, Diderot and the Encyclopaedists. The Bolshevik revolution of Russia in 1917 was prepared by the writings of Marx. Engels and Lenin. Even the more limited movements of German and Italian unification had their literary precursors—Goethe, Hegel and others in German, and Mazzini in Italy. Their writings paved the way for the leaders of action. In recent times in Turkey and in the Arab Lands ground was prepared for reconstruction and independence by philosophers and men of letters.

As it is impossible to understand the meaning and course of the national upheavals in Europe and Asia without explaining their basic ideologies, similarly it is necessary for the proper assessment of the significance and character of the Indian struggle for independence to analyse and explain its philosophical background.

Of the many remarkable leaders who participated in the struggle in the twentieth century only those whose thought inspired large numbers of people to activity need to be discussed here. They were Bal Gangadhar Tilak (b. 1856), Rabindranath Tagore (b. 1861), M. K. Gandhi (b. 1869), and Aurobindo Ghose (b. 1872). They played a leading part in the freedom campaigns. Among the Muslims Mahmud-al-Hasan (b. 1851) and some of his colleagues in the Deoband School and Abul Kalam Azad (b. 1888) were outstanding. Muhammad Iqbal (b. 1873) made a deep impression on the Muslim mind with the result that a large section of the Muslims under the lead of M. A. Jinnah (b. 1876) seceded from India.

These men were not merely political leaders, they were equally makers of opinion and their importance has to be judged as much by the ideas—moral, social and political, which they propounded as by the activities which they organized. There were some startling resemblances in the ideas of the Hindus and the Muslims, nevertheless their points of view differed on fundamental problems of government as also on the strategy and tactics of the struggle, but each one according to his own light endeavoured to advance the cause of Indian liberation.

II. BAL GANGADHAR TILAK

Bal Gangadhar Tilak was born on July 23, 1856 at Ratnagiri, a coastal town in Maharashtra, in a family of Chitpavan Brahmins. His father was a schoolmaster, but his ancestors had held administrative posts in the service of the Peshwas. In childhood he had heard stories of the great exploits of the Maratha Sardars and of the daring deeds of the leaders of the Revolt of 1857. They had made a deep mark on the impressionable mind of the young boy.

Tilak was a high-spirited wilful lad, not easily amenable to discipline and not readily agreeable to routine. But he showed unusual qualities of head and heart. He had an independent, precise and analytical intellect—sharp, keen, perspicacious and decisive. His endurance and impertubability were equally remarkable. He was not shaken by misfortune nor unduly elated by success. His body might suffer but his spirit never yielded to weakness on account of calamities. However, he was a realist, practical-minded in his views and willing to compromise. He evolved a clear and effective strategy for carrying on the struggle for independence, which was largely followed after his death by the Congress under the supreme command of Gandhiji.

Tilak in his early youth had made up his mind to dedicate his life to the independence of the country. In 1876 he took his B. A. degree with Mathematics in the first class and then studied law. But his mind was occupied with the problems facing the Indian people, and he came to the conclusion that the only remedy for its ills was freedom, power to regulate and administer the country's affairs, Swaraj, that is, India for Indians.

There were two main obstacles in the way. In the first place, the armed might of an empire which was the most powerful in the world. Secondly, the inferiority complex of the educated class, its lack of confidence in the people concerning their ability to successfully challenge British superiority in organization, knowledge and character.

These obstacles could be removed by mobilizing the immense mass power against the might of the Government and rousing the sense of self-respect, courage and pride among the elite. With an army composed of vast numbers, unafraid of modern weapons, and a leadership self-sacrificing, self-reliant and firm, what appeared impossible could be achieved.

The solution of the problem required two things: (1) to change the mentality of the educated, to rouse their sense of self-esteem, to stimulate their pride in India's past, to inspire in them faith in their country's present capability and future destiny; (2) to induce the masses to enter the arena of politics and to organize and mobilize them.

The first depended upon a moral revolution. The Indian had been confronted with this problem from the early beginnings of British rule. The old and traditional ideas seemed inadequate for a modernizing society and there was an earnest effort to find a philosophy of life suited to the changing situation. Ram Mohan Roy, Dayananda, Keshab Chandra Sen, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Vivekananda, Bankim Chandra Chatterji and others had sought to find an answer, and to suggest how to meet the challenge of the West.

Following their lead Bal Gangadhar Tilak joined in the quest. He was, however, more acutely concerned with the conduct of the individual in society, striving to throw off the yoke of the foreigner in order to lead an independent life. It appeared to him that the problem required a deeper consideration and more philosophical approach than it had thus far received.

He commenced this enquiry even as he was a student in college. He had to find a justification for his resolve to dedicate his life not to the pursuit of his personal advancement but to the interests of his people's welfare. His search was undertaken not purely for intellectual satisfaction but for the guidance of his practical activities. As a highly intellectual and profoundly earnest young man he addressed himself to unravel the fundamental principles underlying human conduct. He arrived at definite conclusions.

He became convinced that for Indians the system of ethics taught in the *Bhagawad Gita* was of paramount importance. It prescribed the course of moral action which met the needs of modern times. But Tilak's life was extremely busy and full of trouble and turmoil. It was only when he was incarcerated in Mandalay prison that he obtained the opportunity to embody his views in a book. He wrote a learned commentary on the *Gita* in Marathi and gave it the title *Gita Rahasya*—the secret of the *Gita*.

Before him many thinkers had written treatises to explain the teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita*, in accordance with their particular personal points of view. Among them the interpretations of Sankara and Ramanuja were most popular. Sankara believed in the idealist principle known as *Jnana Marga* (the path of knowledge or gnosis). The end of life is the realization of the identity of *Atman* (individual self) and *Brahman* (the absolute or transcendental self). The traveller along this path should renonunce the world which is unreal (*maya*) and through contemplation and meditation attain the knowledge which confers freedom.

Ramanuja advocated the path of *Bhakti* (devotion). By means of *Bhakti* or cultivation of intense love for and complete surrender to God the devotee merges his self in the supreme self. This merger implies that God permeates the soul of the individual. The soul is filled with the blissful vision of God. This is the *summum bonum* of life.

There were other commentators too, for example, Madhva, Vallabha and Nimbarka in the middle ages and a number in the modern times both from the West and India. Tilak was not satisfied with their interpretations and was convinced that they had not understood fully the fundamental teaching of the *Gita*. His study of the text gave him a somewhat different meaning. He says ;

"There has not been a commentator of the *Gita* who did not advocate a pet theory of his own and has not tried to support the same by showing that the *Bhagavad Gita* lent him support. The conclusion I have come to is that the *Gita* advocates the performance of action in this world even after the actor has achieved the highest union with the supreme deity by *Jnana* (knowledge) or *Bhakti* (devotion). This action must be done to keep the world going by the right paths of evolution which the Creator has destined the world to follow."[1]

The *Gita Rahasya* critically examines the views of Sankara and Ramanuja and finds them inadequate. He shows that neither *Jnana* alone nor *Bhakti* alone is the end of man's endeavour. *Jnana* leads to the knowledge of God, but having attained that knowledge what then is the next step ? The same question arises in connection with the goal of *Bhakti*. The *Gita* according to Tilak, points to a further stage, namely, disinterested action (*Niskama Karma*). The process of action (*Karmayoga*) which aims at the perfection of man is preceded by or accompanied with the endeavour to realize perfect truth—*Jnana*, and perfect love—*Bhakti*. Thus *Jnana* or *Bhakti* are the foundations of *Karma*—*Jnana-Bhakti-Samanvita Karmayoga*. This means that the man who aspires to perfection has first to realize that his self is identical with that of the universal self-God, and that this identity is experienced in divine love.

The *Gita* points out that action is necessary for life and unavoidable, both the ignorant and the wise are under obligation of nature to engage in action. It is, therefore, not possible to renounce action and thus obtain perfection. Nor is it possible to attain the highest goal by following the injunction of the Vedas, because they speak in terms of happiness (*Swargapara*) which is rooted in the elements of matter (*Prakrita gunas*).

The state of the highest bliss is reached through right action. One can acquire it by developing a determinant will (*vyavasayatmika buddhi*) and a stable mind (*sthita prajna*). This requires that he should control his sense organs and intellect and abandon desires and appetites, and without attachment to fruit, free his senses from worldly attractions and repulsions and exercise equability of temper in pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat.

The aim of man ought to be so to act as if his actions were a sacrifice for promoting the welfare of all (*sarvahitarata*) and the good society (*lokasamgraha*). He should concentrate his energies to the Divine and render "service in obedience to Law and Duty"

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[1] Tilak, Bal Gangadhar; *His Writings and Speeches* (Ganesh & Co,) Madras;, pp.260-61.

On the basis of these principles Krishna called upon Arjuna to fight the Kauravas, not for the sake of dominion and self-aggrandisement, but in order to establish the rule of righteousness. By so surrendering his will to God Arjuna fulfilled the condition for the realization of the supreme end of life, and set an example (*pramana*) to all men.

For Tilak the *Gita* is the sacred scripture of morals, inviting men to the highest type of ethical conduct. The *Gita* is not a sectarian treatise, for it is addressed to humanity as a whole. Its basic teachings are identical with those of Islam, Christianity and other religions; any community or caste will find in it a philosophy of life consonant with their highest aspirations. Its rational, non-authoritarian, non-communal, non-sectarian, monistic gospel supports the modern values of liberty, equality and brotherhood of man. Kant's categorical imperative and Green's conception of the superconscious principle exercising control over our minds, rationalizing will and desire, and providing a basis for knowledge, are two examples of western thinking on lines similar to those of the *Gita*. The philosophy of the *Bhagavad Gita* could, therefore, furnish the rallying call for all Indians.

Tilak did not agree with Sankara and Ramanuja whose interpretation of the Vedanta and *Gita* was individualistic. On the contrary, he found in the *Gita* a gospel of social action, disinterested, rational, universal, devoted to the highest good of society. He says, "*Karma-yoga* fused with Spiritual Knowledge and Devotion, is the true purpose of the *Gita*."[2] By Karmayoga is meant the Science of Proper Conduct (*Sadachar*). This science while taking into consideration external behaviour regards reason or motive as the true criterion of the morality of an action. The action is good if the reason is pure, evil otherwise.

In the light of this philosophy of action he considers the problem of India. The people of India were submerged in unhappiness and misery. It was, therefore, incumbent upon them to discover the causes of their pitiable state and endeavour to reduce their unhappiness by action for the public good (*Lokasamgraha*). It was an injunction of religious duty (*dharma*) to remove obstacles in the way of realizing social welfare.

The basic factor in the maintenance of society and security of its welfare is its political status. A society which is under foreign domination lacks the primary condition of welfare. It is deprived of the responsibility for formulating what is good for it and striving to effectuate the good. In the case of India its rulers denied the very existence of an Indian people. The British ignored that India had developed political unity under several empires in the past, and that considering the magnitude of its area and population, its linguistic and religious diversities were relatively not greater than those of other countries of the world. The European racial theories disregarded the fact that the Indian people were not primitive barbarians, but highly civilized folk who had evolved magnificent systems of religions, philosophies, arts, literatures, and sciences. Their feats of engineering, metal-casting, lapidary craft, spinning, weaving and many others, exhibited a skill and taste in advance of the civilized contemporary nations.

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[2] Tilak, B.G, *Gita Rahasya* translated by B.S. Sukthankar, 2nd edition, p.664.

Their history furnished a proud record of great statesmen, administrators, warriors, prophets, reformers, poets, and men of genius in almost every department of national life, yet the British treated the people as if they were children at school who had to earn promotion by gradual and painful steps from class to class. Even then they doubted whether the people would ever be able to make the grade.

Although the British exercised unlimited power, it must be admitted that they refused to face up to their responsibilities; though they professed and proclaimed their intention to prepare India for self-government, their deeds contradicted their words. It may be pointed out that the situation in India did not differ in essence from that in the countries of Europe. The evolution of medieval societies into modern ones is a world-wide phenomenon. It appeared in Western Europe first and then spread to other countries of the world. The countries which had fortunately escaped European domination, changed *suo motu*, like Turkey, Iran, Japan and China. The countries which had the misfortune to fall under European domination found in their government an obstinate factor of obstruction—for example, in Indonesia, Indo-China, Malaya, Burma, the Arab countries of Western Asia and Northern Africa and India.

The British established the steel frame of political unity, maintained peace and order and introduced though unevenly the tools of modernization—means of transport and communication, education, medicine and hygiene. But they retarded and distorted the progress towards the evolution of a modern, industrialized, self-governing society. On the other hand, they exploited India's weakness to widen the gulf between its communities and to impede the progress of industrialization.[3]

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[3] Some British and American writers have questioned the correctness of this judgment. Among them are many British officials like Chesney, Strachey, Curzon and non-officials like Theodore Morison, Findley Shirras, Knowvles, Vera Anstey and Griffiths. Among their American supporters is Morris D. Morris. But, against them is a vast host of anti-imperialist writers and what is more overwhelming factual, evidence.

Tilak was one of those clear-headed leaders who had no doubts about the nature of imperialist domination. He evolved the strategy to rid the country of this domination. He knew that the structure of the *Raj* was erected on two pillars—force of armed might or fear, and the psychological superiority consciousness or prestige.

In his view not only did war and peace begin in the minds of men, domination and subservience too were rooted in the mind. It was, therefore, necessary to strive to effect a change in the Indian mind—to create self-confidence, courage and fervour among the elite and a living interest of their own welfare among the masses. In the nineteenth century, religious and social reformers, educationists, journalists and politically conscious leaders had already traversed the first stages of the journey. The time had come to speed up the movement and propel it towards its destined goal.

In reviewing Tilak's contribution, it is necessary to note that his active life is divided into two equal halves. The first half belongs to the nineteenth century, i.e. from 1880 to 1900; and the second half falls during the first two decades of the twentieth century, i.e. 1900-1920. During the first half he was mainly concerned with the public life of Maharashtra, in the second half he played his part as the foremost leader of nationalist India.

In order to shed the incubus of the inferiority complex he employed several means. One was to establish educational institutions—schools and colleges, where modern education could be imparted in an atmosphere that evoked patriotism and moral courage among the youth. So the New English School was opened under the joint enterprise of Tilak, Chiplunkar, Agarkar and Namjoshi. "The rejuvenation of the land of their birth was their goal." In five years (1881-1885) the number of pupils tripled from 336 to 1009.

Then the Deccan Education Society was founded in 1884 to give permanence and stability to the School. Next year the Fergusson College was started, for spreading western knowledge through Indian missionary teachers. Among them was Tilak who taught Sanskrit literature and Mathematics.

The second means of educating public opinion was the press. Consequently in 1881 the *Kesari* written in Marathi was issued. Its purpose was indicated in these words; "The evils of flunkeyism and flattery have been growing since the beginning of the imperial rule and surely every honest man will admit that it is harmful to the true interests of our country."[4]

The other paper the *Maharatta* was produced in English with the same object. The two papers were doughty champions of justice—

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[4] Tahmankar, D.V., *Lokmanya Tilak*, p. 26.

social and political. They did not spare ancient abuses—the exploitation of the poor, the weak and the out-caste, or the arrogant assertion of privileges by the high castes. Nor did they hesitate to condemn the domination of the country by the British and their claim to racial superiority and their endeavours to reduce the country to the status of a colony. While they laid stress upon the aspects of Indian culture which were healthy and sound, they were not blind admirers of the West. They both pleaded the cause of the masses sunk in misery.

Thirdly, Tilak was an enthusiastic and convinced advocate of the moral and religious ideas of the *Bhagavad Gita*. By lectures and articles in the papers he propagated these ideas and called upon the people of India to practise the *Karmayoga* of the *Gita*.

In the fourth place, Tilak sought to awaken the pride of the educated classes in their heritage through books like the *Orion*, *The Arctic Home in the Vedas*, and the *Gita Rahasya*

Lastly, he set the example of a *Karmayogi* by his life of unflinching courage, uncomplaining endurance of suffering in the cause of Indian freedom, selfless devotion and steadfast service. In the words of Gandhiji, "for us he will go down to the generations yet unborn as maker of modern India."[5]

The other pillar which sustained the British raj was its armed might. The Government maintained a large, highly trained and well equipped army and was backed by the naval and military forces of the United Kingdom. On the other hand, Indians were totally disarmed. In the revolt of 1857 they had suffered a complete defeat. The British were very conscious of their superiority and from time to time reminded Indians that they had been conquered by the sword and that their country was held in subjection by the sword.

In this situation the Indian leaders thought that an armed rising was not possible. Realising this no armed rising was attempted and no one sought military support from any of the rivals of the UK, nor was any attempt made to import arms from abroad. The exceptions were: (1) the endeavour of Mahmud-al-Hasan of Deoband to enlist the support of Turkey and Afghanistan; (2) the proposal of Har Dayal, Mahendra Pratap and others to induce Afghanistan to support the provisional government which they established in Kabul during the First World War; (3) the attempts of Jatin Mukherji, Narendra Bhattacharya and others to raise a revolt with the help of the Germans. The fourth instance was the most outstanding; under Subhash Chandra Bose's leadership the Indian National Army was organized to free India from the British yoke with the help of the forces of Japan which had occupied Burma and invaded India.

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[5] Tendulkar, D.G., *Mahatma*, Vol. I, p. 371.

Their failure showed that a peaceful and non-violent struggle was the only practical alternative. But the precondition of its success was a mobilization of the only asset available to the leaders, namely, the overwhelming numbers of the population. If they could be organized they would match the armed might of the British and demonstrate the unity of the Indian people. Their resistance—even though passive, could paralyse the government. Tilak, therefore, decided to organize a movement in which the masses would be involved. But he believed that the masses could only be attracted by causes which appealed to them. The unsophisticated people living in the villages of Maharashtra could be roused by such activities as a festival in honour of the god Ganapati and a function to celebrate the glorious exploits of Shivaji.

According to him it was necesary that politicians should refrain from offending the people's sensibilities by challenging their cherished traditions. The immediate aim was acquisition of power to legislate and not to introduce social reform which could await the attainment of independence. Tilak's feeling was that, "if the masses are drawn to the Congress, it is possible that they may not lend their support directly or indirectly, to the cause of the Social Conference."[6] Tilak, therefore, pressed upon the Congress the adoption of a programme which would evoke mass support. The essential feature of this programme was self-reliance and sacrifice. The people must be prepared for resistance on a large scale and for this purpose a programme with four components—national education, *swadeshi*, boycott and *Swaraj* was suggested. It was really a programme of a gradual withdrawal of support from Government in the sphere of culture, economy, justice and administration. To the extent the Government organs were excluded from any of these sectors, the national organization would take their place, till the entire Government passed into Indian hands.

It was a bold plan. But as a realist, Tilak knew the country had to be prepared for it by degrees. He was, therefore, in favour of development by stages. He did not contemplate a sudden and total withdrawal of the British, but a gradual transference of power. He insisted, however, that the transference should be real and not merely formal or notional, as was the case with the Acts of 1909 and 1919. He advocated responsive cooperation during the process of transfer and he did not look beyond the goal of Dominion Status within the British Empire, recognizing the King of England as the titular head, possessing equal authority with UK and the Dominions.

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[6] *The Mahratta*, November, 3, 1895.

He formulated the immediate and remote objects of political activity in these words, as reported by Nevinson, "Certainly, there is a very small party which talks about abolishing the British rule at once and completely. That does not concern us; it is much too far in the future. Unorganized, disarmed and still disunited, we should not have a chance of shaking the British suzerainty...... Our object is to obtain eventually a large share in the administration of our country. Our remote idea is a confederacy of Indian provinces possessing colonial self-government, with all imperial questions set apart for the Central Government in England. Perhaps our Home Rule would take the form of Provincial Councils of fifty or sixty members, nominated or indirectly elected at first but elected by popular vote as education becomes more general."[7]

Concerning his party's difference from the Moderates he is reported to have said : "They (the Moderates) still hope to influence public opinion in England by sending deputations .... and pleading the justice of our case. Both parties, of course, have long ago given up all hope of influencing Anglo-Indian opinion out here ....We Extremists have determined on other methods. It is a matter of temperament and the young men are with us. Our motto is 'Self-reliance, not Mendicancy'."[8]

The demand of the Moderates was not very different. They depended for its fulfilment on the good sense of the British rulers. and looked askance at the methods Tilak advocated. To them a mass movement was anathema.

Tilak has been charged by his detractors with supporting the cult of violence. It is said that he justified the killing of Afzal Khan by Shivaji and gave encouragement to Chapekar brothers who murdered Rand. Tilak justified Shivaji on the ground that "great men are above the common principles of morality"[9] and concerning the Chapekars and the Bengali bomb throwers, the *Kesari* wrote, "Those murders have assumed a different aspect from ordinary murders owing to the supposition (on the part of the perpetrators) that they were doing a sort of beneficent act."[10]

The accusation that Tilak was an advocate of the bomb was first made by the Anglo-Indian Press after the Rand murder in Poona in 1897. *The Times of India,* the spokesman of Anglo-Indian opinion, expressed the suspicion that the Poona Brahmins were forming secret plots and that Tilak's writings were encouraging them. In consequence Tilak was prosecuted and was held guilty and sentenced to imprisonment. In 1908, he was again prosecuted and accused of "an attempt to terrorize Government by threats open or concealed to the effect that bombs will be thrown".

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[7] Nevinson, H.W., *New Spirit in India,* pp. 32-33.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 73.

[9] *Kesari,* June 15, 1897

[10] *Ibid.* May 12, 1908; 1908 Trial Exhibit H, p. 51.

In 1910, Valentine Chirol, the foreign correspondent of the London *Times* came to India to report on the political unrest. The British officials who regarded Tilak as an enemy of British rule extended to him the fullest help, even placing confidential papers and secret police reports at his disposal. Chirol insinuated that there existed an indirect connection between the plaintiff (Tilak) and the said (Rand and Ayerst) murders and that he was guilty of them. The accusations were repeated in the report of the Rowlatt Committee. It stated: "The Rand murder was effected at a time when Tilak, the most prominent journalist in the Deccan, was publishing incitements to his countrymen to strike a blow for independence and disregard the limitations of the Penal Code."[12]

When Tilak challenged such defamatory statements by bringing a case for libel against Valentine Chirol before the King's Bench Division consisting of Justice Darling and a special Jury, the expected happened. A prejudiced judge and jury condemned Tilak and gave a verdict in favour of the defendant behind whom were arrayed all the forces of Government.

But whatever the obviously politically biased judgements of Strachey, Davar and Darling might be, his countrymen's affection and admiration for Tilak were not affected. For them his denial of the charge of preaching or abetting murder was an incontrovertible vindication of his character. Had he not stated in the article in the *Kesari* dated 27 September 1904: "It is a sign of unmanliness to incite anyone to commit the murder of officers."[13]

In 1914, he published a statement in which he said, "I have no hesitation in saying that the acts of violence, which have been committed in the different parts of India, are not only repugnant to me, but have in my opinion only unfortunately retarded to a great extent the power of our political progress."[14]

It may be added, however, that Tilak was not like Gandhiji—an absolute believer in the principle of non-violence. He did not consider war as multitudinous murder like Green, who however, justified defensive wars, as if it was possible to judge whether a war

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[11] Chirol, Valentine. *Indian Unrest*, p. 48.

[12] *Sedition Committee Report* (1918), p. 13.

[13] *Tilakanche Kesaritil Lekha*, Vol. II, p. 538

[14] *Mahratta*, August 30, 1914.

was defensive or offensive. He approved of armed rising for achieving national independence. He admired the courage of those who risked their lives in what appeared to them the national interest. After all tyrannicide has been applauded throughout the ages, for example, in ancient Greece the murderers of Hipparchus, Harmodius and Aristogiton and in the twentieth century the Russian assassins of Rasputin. If as Tilak believed the motive is the basis of moral judgement and not merely the outward act, then the case assumes a character which does not admit of either unequivocal approval or disapproval.

In any case Tilak did not favour the use of violence and desired that the Indian struggle should be carried on by non-violent means.

Tilak's so-called ethical relativity is a misunderstanding. In fact in his *Gita Rahasya* he has drawn attention to the weakness of the western ethical philosophies—materialist, utilitarian, intuitionist and idealist. He has compared them with the spiritual ethics of the *Bhagavad Gita* which requires the identification of the individual self with the perfect self, the knowledge of the supreme good and devotion to God; and shows the absolute nature of the *Karmayoga*.

Tilak's support of Hindu communalism, especially during the provincial period of his career was unfortunate. He knew that the intransigence of the Muslims in such matters as cow-sacrifice, music before mosques, and carrying banners in their religious processions, was a consequence of the divide and rule policy of the Government. The riots which followed such acts were therefore really traceable to the exigencies of foreign rule. The Muslims were tools in the hands of the bureaucrats.

Knowing all this he should have directed his wrath against the principals, and not the agents. Unfortunately, instead of weaning the Muslims away from their unwise courses and befriending them, he undertook to organize the Hindus to stand up to them and to isolate them by boycotting the Muharram procession which had been attended every year in the past by the Hindus in large numbers. It should have been obvious to him that it was not possible by means of coercion to make the Muslims love the Hindus. The inauguration of the Ganapati festival and the celebration of the Shivaji anniversary were bound to create apprehensions in the mind of the minority community, especially as the bureaucracy was intent upon exploiting their suspicions.

But there is another side of the picture too. As early as 1888, in an article in the *Kesari*, he deplored the advice given by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan to the Muslims to abstain from joining the Congress, and expressed the hope that with the spread of education among the Muslims, the enlightened members of the community would join the national movement. The Lucknow Pact of 1916 between the Hindus and the Muslims was largely the result of the efforts of Tilak. In speaking on the resolution on self-government he said in regard to the Pact:

"It has been said by some that we Hindus have yielded too much to our Mohammadan brothers. I am sure I express the feelings of the Hindu community all over India when I say that we could not have yielded too much. I would not care if the rights of self-government are granted to the Mohammadan community only...... When we have a fight against a third party we stand on this platform united: united in race, united in religion, united as regards all different shades of political creed. That is the most important event of the day."[15]

At the end of the First World War the Muslims in India became deeply resentful of the treatment meted out to the Sultan of Turkey, for they were afraid that with the destruction of the Imperial power of the Sultan the Khilafat would be reduced to the position of the Papacy of Rome limited to spiritual matters only. Gandhiji was greatly disturbed by the Allies' decision regarding Turkey and the British measures in India. In order to rectify these injustices he decided to launch the campaign of non-cooperation against the Government.

The Central Khilafat Committee accepted the programme and determined to follow the lead of Gandhiji. Tilak, though very ill and in fact almost on the brink of death, gave his whole-hearted support to the Mohammadan demand for the preservation of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. He explained :

"It is in the interest of India that the Muslim power of Turkey should remain undiminished. I think the idea of helping the Muslims in their Khilafat agitation is a sound one and Mahatma Gandhi's lead in this matter should be supported by all."[16]

It is unfortunate that Tilak's attitude—especially during the earlier part of his career strengthened the forces of communalism. The lead which he gave hardened their mutual relations. The gulf between them was widened and suspicions against one another were stiffened. Exclusiveness which Syed Ahmad Khan preached to the Muslims brought about a reaction among the Hindus and the desire to establish separate communal organizations, even for political purposes, was quickened. Mahadeo Govind Ranade, Rabindranath Tagore, Aurobindo Ghose, G. K. Gokhale and other leaders were much in advance of Tilak in this matter.

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[15] Tilak, B.G., Indian National Congress, Lucknow Session, December 1916, *Writings and Speeches*, *op.cit.*, pp. 223-24.

[16] Tahmankar, D.V, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

On the question of social reform Tilak has been much maligned by interested parties which disapproved of his politics. He was not a social reformer. Indeed he was a conservative follower of the *Sanaṭana Dharma.* But he strongly objected to an alien government whose powers he wanted to limit and in fact scale down through attrition, imposing reforms in matters which affected society so intimately. Such reforms antagonised the orthodox people, and because they were opposed by a considerable section of the Hindus remained ineffective make-belief. It was not worthwhile to incur displeasure for such dubious progress.

In fact Tilak favoured improvement in the status of women—their participation in public affairs, education, and the minimum age of marriage. His views about caste distinctions and untouchability were such as to delight the heart of any social reformer. He considered absurd the contention that certain castes alone should have the privilege of performing the Vedic rites and he looked upon untouchability as an outrage upon Hindu society. He declared at the Depressed Classes Conference in Bombay in March 1918:

"If a God were to tolerate untouchability, I would not recognize him as God at all......Whatever may be the genesis of untouchability, the sinful nature of the notion is beyond dispute. Untouchability must go......mistakes committed by the Brahmin bureaucracy of old require to be rectified."[17]

When Paranjpe asked him to sign a manifesto condemning untouchability Tilak wrote to him, "I am for removing all caste distinctions regarding interdining and untouchability."[18]

In 1919 there was a bitter controversy between Tilak and Paranjpe. Tilak's reply to Paranjpe contains as it were his article of faith. He remarked:

"I don't hold that a social reconstruction must be undertaken prior to political emancipation. I attach greater importance to the latter. Without the power to shape our own destiny, our national regeneration, in a larger sense, cannot, in my opinion, be effected, and I have throughout my career tried to preach and emphasize this view......A true Nationalist desires to build on old foundations. Reform based on utter disrespect for the old does not appeal to him as constructive work. He therefore tries to maintain and foster a distinct national interest before undertaking any reform...... We don't want to anglicize our institutions and so denationalize them in the name of Social and Political Reforms."[19]

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[17] Bapat, S. (ed.), *Tilak Reminiscences*, Vol. II, pp. 204-5; and *The Mahratta*, March 20, 1918.

[18] Tilak's reply to Paranjpe, December, 12, 1919, in *All About Tilak*, p. 323.

The manifesto which he issued in inaugurating the Congress Democratic Party in 1920 shows how far he had travelled from his early orthodoxy. It says, the party "advocates the removal of all civic, secular or social disabilities based on caste or custom."[20]

On the broad problem of cultural modernization Tilak was a conservative. He had a profound respect for the Indian tradition—Hindu religion, philosophy and ethics. But he employed the modern critical and comparative methods of interpretation. On social questions his stand was that the caste system needed change, perhaps abolition, but the changes ought not to be brought about through laws made by an alien government. In politics there was no alternative to representative parliamentary form of government, a federal union of autonomous provinces.

He appears to have believed in change in the organization of society and state, but no change in the spirit and ideals which India had inherited from its long past. One may, however, legitimately doubt the soundness of this dichotomy between spirit and form, ideal and practice. Society as pointed out by Plato and Aristotle is mind writ large and it is difficult to believe that a social revolution such as Tilak contemplated could be effected without the transformation of the whole mind.

III. AUROBINDO GHOSE

Aurobindo Ghose was among the youngest leaders of the new nationalist movement which exploded like a volcano in the wake of the partition of Bengal. He was the most brilliant among the galaxy of talented men who challenged the Government and directed the people's agitation. C. R. Das who defended him in the famous Alipore Bomb Case described him "as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and the lover of humanity", and invoked the High Court of History to pronounce its judgement on him.

Sixty years have passed since this appeal, and it is time to assess the value of his achievement with some degree of detachment. Unfortunately, although history may establish facts which are more or less universally accepted, it is not easy for it to formulate judgments on men and their activities which would command general assent. In this case when the overtones of the controversies of the first decade of the twentieth century still continue to affect the attitudes of political groups and influence the mind of historians, the task becomes even more difficult. It is, however, impossible to understand the history of the freedom struggle without giving serious consideration to the thought of Aurobindo Ghose.

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[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 313-23.

[20] Tendulkar, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 351.

There is no doubt that his master-mind largely inspired, both in thought and action, the anti-partition agitation in Bengal and that he played an imporant role in the politics of India as a whole. Bal Gangadhar Tilak and he anticipated the ideals and programme of the struggle which under Gandhiji's guidance took a practical shape and culminated in independence. His was undoubtedly a powerful influence in the nationalist upsurge which stirred the country.

Aurobindo Ghose was a genius of a rare order. His intellect in both its span and depth covered an immensity of range. He was a master of many languages. English was almost his mother tongue and he had a wonderful command over its vocabulary and diction. He was well versed in Latin and he won a scholarship for university studies in Greek. He had a good knowledge of French and was acquainted with German and Italian. On return to India he learnt Bengali and Sanskrit, both of which he came to know thoroughly.

Through the instrumentality of these languages he acquired an unusually broad knowledge of history and literature—Indian and European. As literature expresses the mind of its creators and at the same time mirrors the life of society, Aurobindo's studies gave him an extensive acquaintance with human psychology—the motives which inspire men to action, the ends which societies have striven to achieve, the emotions which in the battle of life accompany success and failure and urge to exaltation or drive to despair.

The literary preoccupation, however, accentuated the naturally sensitive, imaginative and emotive tendencies of his mind. As a consequence, his studies in history and philosophy were deeply coloured by his passionate and extrarational approach. Unfortunately this literary bias was not corrected by the study of science.

In history he was greatly attracted by the movements of revolt—for instance, by the revolution inaugurated by Cleisthenes in the Athenian social and political organisation, and by the Gracchi in the Roman Constitution. Joan of Arc appealed to him for her heroic endeavour to rid France of English occupation. Then he greatly admired the American Revolution and the Irish movement for self-government. He wrote a poem on the death of Parnell—'deliverer, most feared, most hated', and another to the Irish nationalists—'patriots who found Erin the mother bleeding, chastised, bound, and armed her with clamorous thunder, terrible and fair'.

Above all he idolized the French Revolution, which in five short years swept away the accumulated social and political debris of thirteen centuries. It produced leaders like Robespierre and Danton who by the mighty strokes of their ruthless hatchets felled the upas trees of feudalism and autocracy. He hankered after a Napoleon who incorporated the Revolution in the new institutions of a renovated France.

Towards England where he spent fourteen years of his formative days he entertained curiously mixed feelings. He was a lover of English literature which he rated among the highest creations of the human mind. Otherwise, English culture—as indeed all western culture, was to him materialistic and soul-killing. English society and institutions were unworthy of imitation—its internal politics were pedestrian. It took England twelve centuries from Runnymede to Hull, to arrive at democracy—their glacier-like pace compared unfavourably with the torrential speed of the French Revolution. Pym and Hampden were puny figures as compared with the leaders of the French Revolution. The English administrators in India were small men, middle class philistines, without the flare of high statesmanship. They were without far-sighted vision or generous impulses or real understanding of those whom they governed. They were vain, arrogant, egotistical, mindful only of their narrow and immediate interest. The English culture rooted in worldliness was as far apart from the Indian culture—essentially spiritual—as the north pole from the south. No compromise—cultural or political—was possible between the two.

Aurobindo's heart was a boiling cauldron of emotions. His loves and hatreds were like white hot lava. His love of India was for him the utterly unreserved abandonment of the worshipper to God. His hatred of foreign rule was as intense as the feeling of a son who sees a monster sitting on the breast of his mother with a dagger in his hand. He had a lofty sense of national dignity and reacted strongly against unmanly conduct. His courage was magnificent. He could attack fearlessly his own countrymen when he considered them wrong and he was ruthless, almost fierce, in his denunciation of the anti-Indian measures of the Government. But he did not allow his indignation to betray him into saying anything unbecoming or vulgar, or overstep the bounds of law, as distinguished from the executive decrees of haughty administrators.

His mind was restless. He was not only full of deep resentment against the weaknesses of his people and against those who had deprived India of its freedom, but was also impatient for action which would quickly achieve India's independence. His writings and speeches reflect the strains and conflicts which disturbed his soul.

Nevertheless, there was in him a compensatory mechanism which sought to maintain his mental equilibrium. He was a dreamy mystically inclined visionary. He was subjected to abnormal experiences of utter loneliness and profound silence from time to time.

In Baroda he started the practice of *yoga* and later consulted Lele, a yoga adept, who advised him to place implicit trust in his inner voice. His study of Vedanta and the *Bhagavad Gita* strengthened his mystic tendencies. Bankim Chandra Chatterji's writings greatly fascinated him, and much of his outlook on individual conduct and national affairs was affected by the study of Bankim's *Ananda Math, Krishna Charitra* and *Dharma Tattva*. About Bankim his opinion was: "Bankim seemed to me to have achieved that (perfection) in his own way as Plato in his or Cicero or Tacitus in theirs, or in French literature Voltaire, Flaubert or Anatole France."[21] He was also indebted to Sister Nivedita whose essay on Kali impressed him. From Bankim he acquired the threefold formula for moral strength—(1) sacrifice and devotion; (2) self-discipline and organization; and (3) religion of patriotism. Regarding the vision of India revealed in the Bande Mataram song he explains:

"It is not till she (the Mother) takes shape as a great Divine and maternal Power in a form of beauty that can dominate the mind and seize the heart that these paltry fears and hopes vanish in the all absorbing passion for the Mother and her service, and the patriotism that works mirades and saves a doomed nation is born."[22]

His lone incarceration in Alipore jail for nearly a year completed the process of conversion. He emerged from the jail a changed man and not long afterwards abandoned his active political life to retire to Pondicherry for contemplation and meditation untrammelled by the pressures and demands of practical affairs, till at last the fever and the fury seemed to pass and a serene certainty possessed him. The remainder of his life he spent in his *Ashram* like a Rishi of old guiding his immediate disciples, trying to solve the problems of those who came to him in quest of knowledge, attending to his extensive correspondence and writing treatises on religious philosophy for the enlightenment of humanity.

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[21] Aurobindo Ghose, *Essays*, Vol. III, p. 330.

[22] Aurobindo Ghose, *Bankim, Tilak, Dayananda*, p. 13.

There are thus three phases of Aurobindo's working life. The first begins with his entry into the University of Cambridge in 1889 and ends in 1905. This was the period of preparation. He was mainly engaged in study, teaching, experimenting and thinking. The second period from 1905 to 1910 was short and stormy, but extraordinarily important in the history of India. He was not the sole or the most prominent leader of the nationalist movement, but he was its most eloquent spokesman.

In 1910, he left Calcutta and settled in Pondicherry, the French settlement on the eastern coast. The circumstances of his flight and subsequent life have given rise to speculation of not altogether complimentary nature. The prophet of the *Karmayoga* of the *Bhagavad Gita* had become an adept in *Yoga* without the *Karma*.

During these forty years he resumed the Yogic exercises which he had begun and abandoned in Baroda. He wrestled with himself in contemplation and meditation in order to realize perfection, to climb to the heights of suprarational consciousness. He wrote abundantly. He composed prolix treatises on Life—an extensive commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita* and a fantastic interpretation of the Vedas. He carried on an enormous correspondence in which he dealt with all kinds of subjects—personal, religious and moral and literary. His highly perceptive and penetrating studies of western and eastern authors fill numerous pages and constitute some of the most attractive specimens of his prose.

But it must be admitted that besides the issue of books and statements the forty years were otherwise sterile from the point of view of history. For while during this period India was engaged in a fierce struggle "to do or die", this lustrous genius whose magic words had once stirred India from the mountains to the seas was immersed in his lonely quest in the almost complete isolation of his Ashram very much like an ancient immured in a cave in the Himalayas.

Whether his mystic practices brought him near his ideal of the superman, it is not possible to tell, but to all appearance his impact on the Indian situation was negligible. But he never lost his interest in the political movements of India, though he refused to be actively drawn into them. When Tilak offered him the editorship of a nationalist paper which he wanted to launch, he declined. In 1923, C.R. Das visited Aurobindo, and discussed the programme of the Swaraj Party with him. Aurobindo gave his support as its aim was responsive cooperation. But he differed on Das's solution of the communal problem. Was opposed to separate representation of the Muslims, and allotment of a percentage of seats in the Calcutta Corporation. He did not approve of the attitude of Gandhiji on the Khilafat question.

Lajpat Rai and Purushottam Das Tandon visited Pondicherry in 1925. At the time of the Round Table Conference in 1932, he reiterated his opposition to the acceptance of the communal principle by the Congress. He predicted that the acceptance would make the Muslims "permanently a separate political entity"

On the opening of the Second World War he issued a declaration which stated :

"We feel that not only is this a battle waged in just self-defence ......but that it is a defence of the civilization and its highest attained social, cultural and spiritual values, and the whole future of humanity. To this cause our support and sympathy will be unswerving, whatever may happen. We look forward to the victory of Britain and, as the eventual result, an era of peace and union among the nations and a better and more secure world order."

In March 1942, Sir Stafford Cripps brought an offer from the British Government seeking India's cooperation in the war effort. Aurobindo welcomed the offer and sent a message to Cripps congratulating him. He also sent personal message to Rajagopalachari and Moonje, and a messenger as his personal envoy to the Congress Working Committee at Delhi, advising the acceptance of the offer. His advice was, however, not accepted.

When on the 15th of August the transfer of power was finally accomplished, Aurobindo addressed the nation expressing his joy that at last one of his greatest dreams had been fulfilled, and his hope about the fruition of his other dreams—the resurgence and liberation of the people of Asia; the union of the world on the basis of a fairer, brighter and nobler life for all mankind; the spiritual advancement of man in accordance with the teachings and traditions of India; and lastly the evolution of humanity towards the perfection of the individual and society, appeared nearing achievement.

For the history of the freedom movement, therefore, the first two periods alone matter, and his ideas about politics are of great significance for these times of trouble and turmoil.

Before going to the Cambridge University Aurobindo Ghose had been kept wholly isolated from India. At St. Paul's, London, a day school, he remained immersed in his studies, but had little opportunity to mix with his school fellows or others, partly on account of his very straitened circumstances. At the University he lived in an ampler atmosphere. He associated with Indian students, regularly read the extracts of the *Bengalee* and received letters also describing the deplorable conditions in India from his father. The study of the revolutionary movements in history had roused his rebellious emotions and created in him a yearning for the liberation of his motherland.

At the University he took two decisions. He joined a secret society—the Lotus and Dagger, which was however still-born—and he resolved to dedicate his life to the service of his country. Thus it happened that though he appeared for the Indian Civil Service examination at the bidding of his father, he managed to fail and thus to avoid the service of the Government which he hated.

In 1893, he returned to India to join the Baroda State service. Shortly afterwards he was transferred to the Baroda College to teach English. During this phase of life, Aurobindo, an out and out westerner, was fast changing into an oriental—a Vedantist, a *Sanatanist* (orthodox Hindu) and a devotee of Kali.

His articles in the *Indu Prakash* of Bombay which he wrote at the behest of his friend Deshpande in 1893 and 1894 are the product of an occidental mind. He expressed disappointment with the Congress which had failed to be "a well of living water, a standard in the battle, and a holy temple of concord."[23] Its achievements had been unimpressive, for it had "not taught to work together, but to talk together." It had limited its support to the middle class intellectuals and not sought the cooperation of the masses, "it had thus reduced itself to insignificance and sterility."[24] The Congress had failed to realize that "our sole assurance of hope, our sole chance in the future"[25] resided in the proletariat. The ideas of the Congress were borrowed from the British who were satisfied with mere political change, but Indians unlike the English were interested not only in the practical aspects of the national problem, and in the machinery of government, but also in the forces which moved it. The Indian attitudes were more like those of the French or the Athenians, for whom culture and ideas were more important.

According to him, India needed a social revolution which aspired not towards the consummation predicted by Macaulay, but "towards perfecting of its potential strength in the free air of political recognition and the full light of political predominance."[26]

Because of its imitative ideals the Indian National Congress had forfeited its title; it had become un-Indian. Its methods, moreover, were utterly unacceptable. It did not understand the nature of the relation between an alien imperialist domination and the subject people kept under rule by military force. Its policy of gaining small political favours by submitting petitions, appealing to the good sense of the ruling classes and its endeavour to rouse the liberal conscience of the freedom-loving Englishmen, was wholly ill-conceived and humiliating. What a political party in India ought to do is to build up the strength of the country on a mass basis, to stand upon its own feet and develop a powerful movement of self-reliance which would compel the British to recognize India's right to be free.

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[23] Mukherjee, Harid[illegible]nd Uma, *Sri Aurobindo's Political Thought*, New Lamps for Old, pp. 68-69

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 112.

The United States of America had done it, the people of Ireland were following this manly path. The Italians had pushed the Austrians out by their own effort. India must adopt similar methods.

These views were too advanced for the times—they were perhaps too exotic and therefore they failed to produce any ripple in the political waters. Aurobindo had to wait many years before he would be heard. Meanwhile, the process of orientalization continued, and when the Partition of Bengal created the opportunity and prepared the country to listen to him, he was ready with his message.

Aurobindo Ghose was convinced that the problem of Indian independence was not merely political; it was much deeper. In fact, the political problem was part of the larger problem of morals. It was an aspect—although a vitally important aspect, of the total social life. But society is individual writ large. Consequently, the understanding of society involves an insight into the nature and function of man.

Thus for the freedom fighter the enquiry why he ought to fight and what he ought to fight for was inescapable, and in India the tradition—which may be traced back to the questionings of Arjuna in the Mahabharata war, seemed to reinforce the view that political objectives ought to be considered in a broadly philosophical perspective.

Both his upbringing—basically western with an Indian superstructure, and the peculiar cast of his mind, inclined him to formulate a philosophy of individual and society, nature and history, and man and God, which would reconcile eastern and western, spiritual and material, religious and scientific thought.

He elaborated systematically this philosophy at length in his magazine *Arya*, during 1914—21, although it will not be extravagant to suppose that at least the outline of his philosophy was already in his mind when he edited the *Bande Mataram*, the *Karmayogin* and the *Dharma* (Bengali). For the ideas expressed in them unmistakably point to this philosophy.

According to Aurobindo's philosophy, then, the Indian struggle for independence was essentially an expression of the urge of the spirit for self-realization. The spirit had a dual aspect—collectively as the nation and severally as its components the individuals. It was the manifestation of this Cosmic spirit perfecting itself in its manifoldness. This philosophy regards the universe and its totality of beings—inanimate matter, living beings and men, as through and through spiritual. The universe receives its existence from the Cosmic spirit, the Supreme Reality (*Brahman*), which is suprarational and transcendent consciousness, and it is the all-embracing being comprehending all creation. It is immortal, without beginning or end. It is beyond the range of sense perception and reflective thought. It is absolute, unknowable, indescribable.

But because matter, life and mind are its manifestations, the Reality appears to the human consciousness as a triune principle—*Sachchidananda*, existence or power, consciousness and joy. In its aspect of joy it is self-revealing. In joy the self expresses itself and sees itself as a reflection in a mirror. This diremption of the self and appearance of the other selves gives rise to the multiplicity of the universe, to the phenomenal world, to the relative existence, that is to the opposites of pure existence, pure consciousness, and pure joy. The formless thus assumes the plurality of forms. The free self of the creator freely emanates itself into creation.

The process of creation is a circular movement, divided into an arc of descent and a reverse arc of ascent. The Supraconscious Reality, the supreme self, descends into the mind which is the multiple individuation of the spirit. The mind is manifested in life which supports and sustains it. Life, which is the second stage of the descent of the spirit, reposes in matter, the third stage of descent, which hides within it the Reality which is its otherness. All three are the forms of the Absolute and therefore none is illusory.

The descent of the spirit into mind, life and matter has its counterpart—the ascent of matter into life, of life into mind and of mind into the supramental.

The locus of the mind in its multiplicity is the individual man. He stands on the middle step of the ladder of ascent. He looks above and sees the enormous steps which he has to negotiate before attaining the heights of the Absolute. He turns his gaze inwards and beholds—though dimly, the ineffable light behind the curtains of rational, psychic, vital and material veils. But the light, though veiled, is there and keeps beckoning him towards his destiny. Matter and life find their fulfilment in man. Matter supplies him with his body, life, his vital and psychic functions—instinct, sense, feeling, will, and intellect which controls and transforms them. But man is also the centre of the revelation of the Cosmic mind. He has, thus, a dual aspect—positive as the manifestation of pure being, pure consciousness and pure joy; and negative as the nidus of limitation, suffering, death.

To man alone is offered the opportunity and the privilege to redeem the universal in the individual, the spiritual in the physical. Man, then, is the bearer of the great trust—the obligation to ascend to the supraconscious. The consummation of the trust takes place through the spiritualization of life—mental, vital and physical; the transformation of life into a richer, more powerful and more perfect form, the realization of possibilities unimaginable in their unspiritualized condition. Says Aurobindo, the liberated man is he "who has entered into the Cosmic consciousness, passed into union with the Eternal and so far as he still accepts life and action, acts by the light and energy of the Power within him working through his human instruments of nature. The largest formulation of this spiritual change and achievement is a total liberation of soul, mind, heart and action."[27]

The means of achieving this spiritualization is *yoga*. By the discipline of *yoga* the mind which is involved in the trammels of nature and life, breaks its bonds and is freed to advance through the overmind to the supramental and the supraconscious. When man reaches this stage the particularity of his will is overruled by the supreme will. He ceases to be the doer and becomes the instrument of the Divine. Nature has been overcome by spirit and man becomes the gnostic being or superman.

Man rooted in the Divine, impelled by the Divine, in search of the Divine, is like the Supreme Being both one and many, unity and variety. He manifests himself both in the individual and society. In fact the individual and society are two sides of the same coin. The individual is so because of his limitation; society is man's endeavour to exceed his limitation, to negate the negations which inhere in his nature. The individual has needs—physical and psychological, based upon matter and life, potentialities, cognitions, feelings and urges which struggle for expression and fulfilment. He is mind knowing what is and pointing to what ought to be, the revelation of the great secret hidden in his innermost being. The needs, the powers, and the quests are common to man in his multiple self, that is society. The unity and plurality make demands upon him for freedom and harmony. It is society which provides conditions of life and growth, conditions of self-expression and self-realization, combination of the perfection of the individual and coordinated harmony of perfecting individuals.

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[27] Aurobindo Ghose, *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, p. 712.

Society is one. It consists of the totality of mankind, it is the manifestation of Cosmic unity and power. Within mankind the individual is the centre—the free being. He contributes by free development of his own nature to the development of the whole and is aided and encouraged in his progress towards perfection by society.

The individual and society are both in the process of self-unfoldment. The individual is struggling to advance beyond the natural ego—the will to live, towards his true self—the divine individuality. Society is the universality of the individual, the higher self, which holds the individual and carries him forward towards his true and real self. There is essentially no difference of ends between the individual and society, however much they may disagree. Society experiments with forms which satisfy the needs and which help in the fulfilment of the potentialities of the individual. For these purposes it creates groups which stand between the individual and humanity, but which through trial and error move towards the realization of human unity.

The needs, the potentialities—physical, vital, psychological, spiritual, are fulfilled in larger wholes which are religious, social, communal, economic and political, and carried through churches, sects, classes, associations, nations, and then beyond nations in humanity and beyond humanity in the universe.

In the hierarchy of social groups the nation occupies the highest position next only to humanity. It has attained this position in the world of today as a result of the social evolution of humanity. But this is not the final stage, and man cannot rest here for all time. He must move towards the final establishment of a world society and a world state.

Aurobindo adopted the scheme of the German historian Lamprecht in tracing the development of human society. The scheme consists of five psychological stages, the symbolic (religous), the typical (ethical), the conventional, the individualistic, and the subjective. The world is now in the fourth stage of evolution where the individual is free and equal and its social counterpart is the nation and the nation state. Social groups have taken differing periods of time to reach this stage. From the formation of the seed of nationalism to its burgeoning into a tree the process has been long, but once the seed is laid, it appears inevitable that it should grow in spite of all circumstances adverse and favourable into a nation. Neither foreign domination, nor changes in language, religion and culture seem to be able to thwart its maturing ultimately into the form nature has destined for it.

The examples of this process in the history of Europe are numerous, but one may be cited to illustrate the theory. The seed of the French nation was formed when the Gaul and the Teuton mingled to live together in the territory appointed by nature to be their homeland. The language and religion of the Gauls were submerged. The new society not yet conscious of its self passed through numerous vicissitudes. In the Middle Ages it became fragmented, and the larger fraction became a part of the English state, till it was liberated through the vision and heroism of Joan of Arc. The Bourbons stabilized the freshly liberated whole. Then France passed through the fiery ordeal of the Revolution and out of it arose the French nation—self-conscious and athirst for glory. More than twelve hundred years passed since the planting of the seed for the end to be consummated.

If India with its much vaster expanse, more numerous population and more varied experience, travelled along the road to reach the goal in nearly twice the time it took France, there is nothing to be surprised at. India has matured more slowly, and India's nationalism had to forge ahead through endless diversities and almost irreconcilable differences; but India has borne along through the ages the traditions, values and ideals which were bound to mature into a free nation. Free India would be the last stage in the arrival of the next stage in world development—the realization of human unity and the spiritualization of man.

The cogency and logic of Aurobindo's philosophy may be open to criticism like all other philosophies, more so because his philosophy is largely based on intuitive flashes of truth and subjective argumentation, though decked out with seductive assurance and presented in persuasive style. Nevertheless, it depends too much on unproven assumptions, undefined terms and analogical reasoning to remain unscathed. Aurobindo looked upon reason as an inferior instrument of the mind and on its deliverance as merely tentative, and one-sided. Reason possesses the capacity of reflection and it produces some order within. It can understand and utilize the order outside. But its province is restricted to the practical needs of life and its reach is limited. Reason, science and philosophy cannot penetrate into the arcana of the spirit. And so Aurobindo had the frankness to confess. "And philosophy! let me tell you in confidence that I never, never, never was a philosopher—although I have written philosophy which is another story altogether........... I was a poet and a politician, not a philosopher."[28]

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[28] Sri Aurobindo, *On Himself and on the Mother*, p. 348.

but the fact remains that he had an extraordinarily rich mind and an exalted spirit. His poetic imagination sustained his views on human life and destiny. They are distinguished by a breadth of outlook and nobility of expression met with among rare thinkers only.

For history, however, it is not the validity of philosophy which so much matters, as its influence on the opinion and conduct of men. Aurobindo's approach to Indian political problems was deeply coloured by his philosophical outlook. This is not surprising, for throughout the 19th century the Indian mind—Hindu and Muslim—was tending to move in the same direction, in the beginning maintaining the position of religion as the primary, if not the sole, concern of the Indian, later treating religion as the support and inspiration of politics. The politicization of mind progressed apace.

In this transformation Bankim Chandra Chatterji among the Hindus and Syed Ahmad Khan among the Muslims were powerful agents. Bankim Chandra (1838—94) was a close student of the nineteenth century European positivist, humanitarian philosophers like Auguste Comte, and he interpreted the *Bhagavad Gita* in the light of this philosophy. According to the authors of *Sri Aurobindo and the New Thought in Indian Politics,* "Bankim's Krishna is not a god of the old Hindu mythology but an ideal man or the superman of all ages, under whose unifying influence the jarring and contending parts of the Indian community could be moulded into a nation".[29]

Syed Ahmad Khan in his interpretation of the *Quran* took pains to prove that its teachings were fully in accord with modern scientific social thought.

Aurobindo who early came under the influence of Bankim Chandra gave a strong impetus to the movement. Religion became for him the key to the problems of India and he interpreted the history, culture and civilization, and the political striving of India in terms of his religious philosophy. Apparently he adopted the concept of superman from Bankim.

Aurobindo had dedicated his life to three main objects—nationalism, freedom and spiritualization of life. His nationalism in its nature and implication had the stamp of his peculiar genius. But as in other leaders of nationalist movements he sought to discover in history its source and character. He found in Indian history an inevitable tendency to nationhood. Its roots were hidden in the hymns of the *Vedas* with their formulation of the concepts of *Samrat* and *Chakravartin* and their prescription of the rites of *Asvamedha* and

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[29] Mukherjee, Haridas and Uma, *Sri Aurobindo and the New Thought in Indian Politics*, p. XV.

Rajsuya Yajnas. The *Vedas* laid down the spiritual foundations of Indian culture on which the future nation would be built. The *Ramayana* depicts the reign of *Dharma*, the second stage in India's development. The *Mahabharata* describes a society in the grip of the spirit of enquiry, in search of an ideal state, and the evolution of an ideal political and social system. The rise of Buddhism marks a turning point in the progress of this development. The old Vedic culture decayed and confusion ensued. A succession of empires—indigenous and foreign, followed. Although they became a prey to centrifugal forces and were destroyed, each brought the tendency to unity nearer success. Foreign rule in India, like foreign conquests of England, Russia, Spain, Italy, and other countries, was instrumental in the diminution of internal diversities and promotion of cohesion. The external unity provided by the rule of foreigners helped to evolve the psychological unity or national consciousness among the peoples. But the time taken by this evolution depended upon the peculiar circumstances of each country, and the character of the change effected was different in different cases.

Muslim rule in India thus gave an impetus to the yet unrecognized ancient inward movement towards the emergence of Indian nationality. About the rule of the Mughals over India Aurobindo said, "When the Mughal ruled, he ruled as a soldier and a conqueror, in the pride of his strength, in the confidence of his invincible greatness......... He trusted his subjects, gave them positions of power and responsibility, used their brain and arm to preserve his conquests and by the *royalty* of that trust and noble pride in his own ability to stand by his innate strength, was able to hold India for over a century".[30]

The British conquest completed the process. It smashed the traditional political, economic and social system, brought ruin upon the ruling classes on the one hand and the village polity on the other. It rudely shook the placidity of the Indian mind. However, the shock of western culture which is basically different from the Indian, pushed above the threshold of mind the self-consciousness of India. The womb of time had at last given birth to nationalism.

Indians of different religious persuasions and of different regions recognized in the countenance of the new-born child features which attracted them, so that each one marked in him the lines of his own ancestry. So far as Aurobindo was concerned the claim of descent reached back to the Vedas, and the nature of the hereditary links was spiritual. The divine force which had worked in secret conspiracy to this denouement was symbolized in the figure of *Kali* the Mother, the personification of time which begets all creation. For him nationalism was veritably a religion, the phrase motherland was not a figure of speech but literal truth. He writes, "Nationalism is a divinely appointed *Shakti* of the Eternal and must do its God-given work before it returns to the bosom of the Universal Energy from which it came".[31]

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[30] *Ibid.*, p. 344.

In the life of nationalism there are four periods—of secret incubation culminating in sudden birth; of emergence and struggle, of persecution and survival; then of triumph; and lastly of fulfilment. Obviously nationalism first awakes in the mind of the few, then it gradually spreads in widening circles, till ultimately it permeates the whole society. Even at its zenith, individuals and groups accept it in varying degrees of intensity while emphasizing its different aspects. Aurobindo advocated, "Nationalism is simply the passionate aspiration for the realization of the Divine Unity in the nation, a unity in which all the component individuals, however various and apparently unequal their functions, as political, social or economic factors, are yet, really and fundamentally one and equal".[32]

If he regarded nationalism as the essence of the Hindu philosophy of self-realization, he was aware that India was the home of many religions and cultures. He wrote:

"Though the present Indian nationality is composed of many races, and the present Indian culture of more than one world civilization, yet it must be admitted that the Hindu forms its base and centre; and while submitting to all the varied influences and expanding itself perpetually under all these foreign contacts, it has given a historical mark to those world cultures that have found a habitation in India....... Both Christianity and Islam have come to stay in India, and form essential elements in her present life and thought. The Hindus will no more be Christianized at present than they had been Mohamedanized under the rule of the Moslems. Neither will Indian Christians be Hinduized, or the Indian Mohamedans be converted to Hinduism. The different world religions representing different world cultures that have found a habitation in India will remain here always, form elements of the common national life, and contribute to the evolution of the composite culture of modern India."[33]

In an article appearing in the *Bande Mataram* of March 1909, he dealt with the Muslim problem, and answered the question, "What can we offer to the Mohamedans to induce them to join us"? It was obvious that the nationalists could not compete with the Government in offering advantages, nor could permanent unity be effected by harping on common interests. The appeal to common sentiment confronted serious difficulties, for "the sentiment of the Mohamedans is stronger in respect of religion than of nationality". In these circumstances, "if we are to create a common sentiment it can only be by awakening in their hearts the sentiment of common brotherhood with their Hindu fellow-countrymen. To do this we must first nourish the sentiment ourselves. A political show or talk of brotherhood will not serve, for it will ring false to the ear of feeling; and no true unity can be effected by insincere professions. But if our youngmen who are now beginning to get more and more the vision of the Mother are allowed to nourish that sentiment in their hearts, their natural feeling of brotherhood with all sons of the Mother, will drive them to experience the same feeling with regard to the Mohamedans...... It cannot be done by diplomacy, it cannot be done by logic, it can only be done by the appeal of heart to heart. When our Mohamedan brothers find the sentiment of nationality manifesting itself in deeds of love and service, the irresistible claim of heart upon heart will establish itself, and they will then begin to understand nationalism in its truth and beauty".[34]

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[31] *Ibid.*, p. 226.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

[33] Mukherjee, Haridas and Uma, *Bande Mataram and Indian Nationalism*, pp. 93-94.

Some of the effects of the involvement of politics and nationalism with religion were unfortunate. Religions speak in absolute terms and demand exclusive loyalties, and differences in religion tend, therefore, to assume irreconcilable stances making compromise between their followers difficult. The fostering of absolutist attitudes of religion in politics which is a matter of temporal interests and adjustments may prove disastrous, as it did in the case of India.

The attempt to blend religion and politics failed to achieve the purpose which Aurobindo had strenuously advocated during the partition agitation. His flight to Chandernagore and then to Pondicherry was symbolic of his failure.

The religious ideology had consequences which Aurobindo himself might have deplored, as they defeated the purpose of Indian unity which he so eloquently preached. It engendered false pride among the Hindus in regard to their past and present and encouraged the chauvinistic tendencies among them. On the other hand, it strengthened the suspicions of the Muslims concerning Hindu ambitions and provided justification for their fears regarding Hindu domination.

Then the exhortations to nationalist sentiment in terms of Kali worship could not appeal to the non-Hindus who formed nearly half the population of Bengal (44 per cent), and a quarter of the total population of the whole of India. For many Hindus outside Bengal Kali worship did not evoke the same enthusiasm as in Bengal. In Maharashtra Tilak sought to rouse patriotic feelings by reviving the glories of Shivaji and by invoking the worship of Ganesh. In the Panjab under Arya Samaj influence the revival of the Vedic past and not the worship of Kali or Ganesh was the slogan of the Hindus.

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[34] Mukherjee, Haridas and Uma, *Sri Aurobindo and the New Thought*, pp. 295-96

The awakening of national consciousness—a protean phenomenon, was one principal object of Aurobindo; the other equally important one was the realization of freedom. His contribution to this object was outstanding. In the first place, he stated for the first time in the clearest possible terms the political goal of the Indian struggle. He explained the meaning and implications of foreign rule and their total incompatibility with national self-respect and national material and moral welfare. It was impossible for any nation to rise to the full stature of its inherent capacity while it remained under the domination of an alien power. In his words, "according to Hindu Philosophy self-knowledge and self-realization are the end of all religions. It is difficult to see how that greatest aim of human existence can be fulfilled, if influences from outside disorganise us and stifle our growth".[35]

He held that subjection made a people wholly *tamasik*; "a sort of physical, intellectual and moral palsy seizes them and keeps them down to a low level of being; they are like insects grovelling in the dust".[36]

It was, therefore, the aim of the nationalist movement to restore the spiritual greatness of the nation, and its precondition was political regeneration or liberation. The fact of the matter was that the nation state was the life-breath of society—a nation which failed to achieve it or having achieved it failed to preserve it must die, and history is strewn with such corpses. An emerging nation must obtain statehood and cannot rest till it has done so.

Nothing short of complete independence was relevant to this process. No compromise, like colonial self-government, which in any manner restricted India's independence, was acceptable. Independence was Aurobindo's creed—a matter of belief and conscience, and therefore not capable of compromise. Aurobindo was so firm in his conviction that he even chose to break with the Congress rather than lower his ideal. He had condemned the Congress as 'unnational' as far back as 1893, and in 1906-10, he railed at its pusillanimous and undignified attempts to resile from the goal of *Swaraj* accepted at Calcutta in 1906, at its little-mindedness "that could not rise superior to servitude", and its 'thoughts that crawled and crept, borne down to earth by the leaden weight of a craven form of a soulless selfishness".[37]

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[35] *Ibid.*, p. 129.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 219.

He was equally annoyed with Morley's Arbroath speech, in which he forecast "the roar of confusion and carnage" if the British withdrew from India. He considered the statement too audacious and hollow to require any serious notice, but even if such a catastrophe was inevitable, he would prefer chaos and confusion to the blessings of *Pax Britannica*. Twenty years before Jawaharlal Nehru's proclamation of *Purna Swaraj* Aurobindo had enunciated it beyond peradventure.

Independence from the yoke of British imperialism was the only possible issue before the country, but the problem was how to effectuate it. The answer was that in the first place the nationalist movement should broaden out from its middle class limitations and take within its fold the masses, whom he called significantly the proletariat of India. He said, "Faith in the potential strength of our people is the basis of our national movement and to realize the strength and energise it by taking every opportunity for unflinchingly courageous action is the only way in which the national movement can be pushed forward to the rapid and triumphant consummation which Asia needs and India demands".[38]

Secondly, the nationalist movement ought to place before the people the concept of "essential equality between man and man, between caste and caste, between class and class, all being, as Mr. Tilak pointed out, different but equal and united parts of the *Virat Purush* as realized in the nation".[39]

The concept of equality implied a socialist state. Aurobindo's opinion was, "without socialism democracy would remain a tendency that never reached its fulfilment...Socialist democracy is the only true democracy, for without it we cannot get the equalized and harmonized distribution of functions," "which was the principle of caste in its original conception".[40]

In the third place, having accepted *Swaraj* as the first and foremost need of India, it was necessary to organize concerted action for its realization. This implied a total war against dominating forces.

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[37] Mukherjee, Haridas and Uma, *Sri Aurobindo's Political Thought*, p. 177.

[38] Mukherjee, Haridas and Uma, *Sri Aurobindo and New Political Thought in Indian Politics*, p. 220.

[39] Mukherjee, Haridas and Uma, *Sri Aurobindo's Political Thought*, p. 127.

[40] Mukherjee, Haridas and Uma, *Sri Aurobindo and New Thought in Indian Politics*, p. 159.

The methods of waging war depended upon considerations of tactics, means, capability. If circumstances permitted armed resistance was justified and no question of moral qualms arose. In other circumstances, passive resistance was the most effective weapon. A secret warlike activity could be combined with public agitation, demonstration and boycott to remove alien control. Violence as a means for achieving independence was not ruled out.

Consequently Aurobindo promoted the formation of secret societies in order to prepare a volunteer corps on which armed rebellion of the future could be based. His brother Barindra Ghosh was entrusted with this side of the programme of national liberation.

But the main part of his programme was passive resistance. The object of passive resistance was to organize an alternative popular authority which would progressively remove the foreigners from various departments of national life and replace them with Indians. He advised making "administration under present conditions impossible by an organized refusal to do anything which shall help either British commerce in the exploitation of the country, or British officialdom in the administration of it".[41] He added:

"We have to establish a popular authority which will exist side by side and in rivalry with a despotic foreign bureaucracy—no ordinary rough-riding despotism, but quiet, pervasive and subtle—one that has fastened its grip on every detail of our national life and will not easily be persuaded to let go, even in the least degree, its octopus-like hold. This popular authority will have to dispute every part of our national life and activity, one by one, step by step, with the intruding force to the extreme point of entire emancipation from alien control. This and no less than this is the task before us."[42]

Passive resistance was really self-development by self-help. The policy of self-development includes every department, "not only *Swadeshi* and National Education, but national defence, national arbitration courts, sanitation, insurance against famine or relief of famine—whatever our hands find to do or urgently needs doing".[43]

The programme was spelt out in the following items:

(1) Boycott of government institutions and education through Indian schools only.

(2) Boycott of British goods and buying of Indian goods (*Swadeshi*).

(3) Boycott of Government administration.

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[41] Mukherjee, Haridas and Uma, *Sri Aurobindo's Political Thought*, p. 46.

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] Sri Aurobindo, *The Doctrine of Passive Resistance*, pp. 73-74

(4) Boycott of bureaucratic courts, and establishing Indian arbitration courts.
(5) Boycott of Government police and army and organizing an Indian defence league.

Ultimately, passive resistance must lead to active resistance or defensive resistance, that is, a no-tax campaign, and the breaking of laws, which would paralyse the Government. "In a subject nationality, to win liberty for one's country is the first duty of all by whatever means, at whatever sacrifice, and this duty must override all other considerations".[44]

It was necessary for this purpose to create a strong central authority to carry out the will of the nation, supported by a close and active organization of village, district and province. This organization ought to be built up by the Congress; otherwise by the people itself and, if necessary, outside the Congress.

Aurobindo's advocacy of passive resistance was countered by two arguments. The one was advanced by those who shrank from aggressiveness as if it were a sin. The answer given by Aurobindo was, politics is concerned with the mass of mankind and the mass of mankind cannot behave as saints; to ignore human nature is to set a premium on injustice and violence by paralysing the hand of the deliverer when raised to strike. The teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita* is an adequate reply to those who avoid battle as a sin and aggression as a lowering of morality.

The other argument was that boycott implied hate; the right course was to heal hate by love, drive out injustice by justice, slay sin by righteousness. However, in reality the boycott is not an act of hate, it is an act of self-defence. The deprecation of boycott is like advising a victim to desist from attacking the murderer. Aurobindo points out that politics is not the function of the Brahmin or the Shudra, as it "is the ideal of the Kshatriya, and the morality of the Kshatriya ought to govern our political actions. To impose in politics the Brahminical duty of saintly sufferance is to preach *varnasankara*".[45]

IV. Rabindranath Tagore

At the beginning of the twentieth century the prospects of the nationalist movement appeared gloomy, the efforts of the Indian National Congress over more than a decade had not brought responsible self-government any nearer. The power and prestige of imperialist Britain were at their zenith. The stillness of the grave seemed to rest upon the people. Self-satisfaction and complacence marked the attitude of the ruling class.

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[44] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

The great movements of religious reform which had stirred the Hindus and Muslims in the second half of the nineteenth century had lost their elan. The Brahmo Samaj which had been revived by Debendranath Tagore was split into factions and Rabindranath Tagore's efforts to restore unity had failed. The Ramakrishna Mission after the death of Vivekananda did not throw up a charismatic leader of equal calibre, and it contented itself with sending missionaries abroad and establishing useful centres of social welfare at home. The Theosophical Society, unable to convince the educated youth of the truths of its occult lore, addressed itself to educational experiments combining ancient Indian ideals and western knowledge.

The aggressive religious polemics of the Arya Samaj were mainly confined to the Panjab and the western districts of Uttar Pradesh. They were softening, but its admirable educational work was gaining in popularity, in spite of differences among its leaders regarding educational ideals and methods.

Sir Syed Ahmad's attempt at religious reconstruction remained abortive. He was overawed by the opposition of the orthodox which threatened to thwart his educational programme. But he turned the direction of the mind of the educated Muslims away from Congress politics.

It was becoming clear that the problems confronting India were complex and required that they should be attacked on a number of fronts, and by new methods. Religious and social reform was necessary, but political change seemed more urgent. Political change, however, depended upon a moral and intellectual revolution—freedom both from the shackles of an otiose tradition as well as from a pusillanimous and blind imitation of the foreign culture. In spite of his western education the mind of the Indian intellectual was split in its loyalties.

It was inevitable that thinkers debating the profound problems of the individual and society should exercise powerful influence in moulding the Indian mind and provide content to the movement for freedom. The fact that the struggle for independence was conducted and led by the intellectual class which naturally attached unusual value to ideological forces gives special importance to the ideological factors in the history of these times. The religious leaders, philosophers and men of letters played a dominant role in shaping the destiny of the people.

Changes in the economic system of the country did indeed powerfully affect political activity, for the very emergence and growth of the intelligentsia was due to them, and the motivation for political activity was largely provided by economic strains and pressures, but the formulation of political objectives and devising the method and strategy of struggle were determined to no small extent by the ideologies. The economic stagnation and industrial immobility of the nineteenth century prepared the soil in which the twentieth century ideas germinated and matured.

It is necessary to understand the philosophies—moral, social and political, which were propounded in these years and which affected the conduct of individuals and groups involved in the struggle for independence.

When the century opened, two main streams of thought were current in the country. One branch consisted of the conservative section, the successors of the Dharma Sabha of Radha Kanta Deb of the first half of the nineteenth century. Bankim Chandra Chatterji was the most redoubtable champion of the school. He pressed into service Herbert Spencer, Bentham and Mill in support of the conceptual structure of neo-Hinduism, of which, according to him, Krishna was the prophet and the *Bhagavad Gita* the holy scripture. He found in the ancient Hindu society all the great values of the modern west—equality, justice, liberty, and democracy. His high intellectual standing and literary reputation which he had justly earned by his creative works, like the novel *Ananda Matha,* gave to his views great prestige. At the same time, he supplied the needed corrective to the deprecatory attitude of the arrogant asserters of western superiority. It must be said about him that modernism was not repudiated by him, for he tried to accommodate it in his philosophical system. He looked upon Krishna not so much as a God as an ideal man, the prophet of the new age.

The Theosophical Society endorsed the principles of orthodoxy, and encouraged Hindu young men to take pride in ancient institutions and customs. But it tried to establish the validity of tradition by the instrumentality of reason.

The Arya Samaj which had aggressively proclaimed the primacy of Vedic Hinduism over all the living religions of the world, proved a forceful supporter of nationalist causes.

Swami Vivekananda not only defended the Hindu faith, he carried the battle into the camp of those who held aloft the flag of western predominance.

The second stream traced its source to the teachings of Ram Mohan Roy, who established the Brahmo Samaj. Debendranath

Tagore sought to strengthen its organization and to provide it with elements which could satisfy the emotional needs of its votaries. Its rejection of some Hindu doctrines—idol-worship and caste, and the adoption by Keshab Chandra Sen's *Nava Vidhana* of Christian elements, led the movement to the breaking point with the Hindu society, but its reverence for the Upanishads and Hindu mystic thought, and the broad tolerance of Hinduism towards divergent beliefs kept it within the fold. Unfortunately this liberal protestant movement broke up into schismatic sects and gradually lost ground. It remained as the faith of some intellectuals only, but it worked as a leaven in their minds, broadening their outlook, and promoting the rationalist secular approach.

Of the Derozian hot gospellers the number had dwindled. Some educated Indians were so dazzled by the glamour of the west that they became deracine imitators of European manners and ways of living, retaining no sympathy with the traditions of their country. But others kept their feet on the soil of their motherland, in spite of the fact that their minds were wholly westernized. But such men were too few to influence society or launch a movement.

The weakening of the liberalism of the occidentalists was aggravated by some tendencies in the revivalist upsurge, especially the romantic reconstruction of the past, which became a prominent feature of the explosive nationalism of the first decade of the country. Thus the field was largely captured by the conservatives, among whom were many enlightened English-educated men. The vast numbers of the economically backward in the towns and villages were conservative by habit and not conviction. The admiration for democratic ideas drew the educated towards the masses and to sympathize with their religious practices and ideas. One unfortunate result of the revivalist tendencies was that communal biases hardened and separatist currents gained speed.

In these conditions at the end of the nineteenth century when discontent was simmering in the masses, and frustration prevailed among the politically conscious elite, India began to perceive that the solution of its problems depended upon unity, self-reliance and sacrifice, and the *mantram* which could rouse the individual to acquire them was that of faith, love and service.

The need produced the men, who by their written and spoken word inspired the fight. Among the many gifted men who appeared during these troublous times Rabindranath Tagore was preeminent. His was a many splendoured genius—poetry, music, drama, fiction, story, essay, letters, almost all forms of literature were adorned by his pen. And he was no mean painter. In the spheres of social action—religion, social reform, politics, economic development, education—his contribution was notable. But he was above all a poet. He was indeed a *Kavi*—one in whom wisdom is combined with poetry. His countrymen reverently called him *Gurudev,* the revered teacher.

Rabindranath was the son of Debendranath Tagore who was a profoundly pious person and a devout follower of Ram Mohan Roy's rationalistic theism in which he had infused a much needed emotional content.

The Tagore family belonged to the aristocracy of wealth of Calcutta. They owned large estates in East Bengal and Orissa and lived in ease and comfort in their sprawling house in Jorasanko. The family had a bar sinister on their escutchion, and what with their unorthodox religious views, lived somewhat aloof from society. Says Tagore, "When I was born, our family had already cut loose its social moorings and floated away from the common barbaric and the common Hindu tradition of numerous rituals and ceremonials, and the worship of gods and goddesses had left only faint traces in our houses".[46]

To the large Tagore household belonged men and women of great talent who, unlike many other estate proprietors, utilized their leisure in the pursuit of refinement and culture—music, art, literature, philosophy. In this milieu Rabindranath was born in 1861—the ninth child of his father. He was followed by five others. Obviously even in normal conditions such a large number of children could not have received the parental care which was their due. With a father absorbed in meditation and religious reflection the care became even more exiguous, the child was left to his own devices and resources. Thus his native independence of mind had a congenial environment for growth.

Rabindranath who escaped the coddling attention of his father and mother which might have spoilt him, had received the most lavish favours from nature. To a capacious intellect, an enquiring and observant mind, a deep interest ranging over wide vistas of knowledge, were added a rare poetic sensibility revelling in the niceties of rhythm and music and alive to the nuances of syllabic harmonies. His imagination was extraordinary fertile, It could soar to the high heavens and even attempt if possible to fly into the beyond and it could plumb the profound depths of human personality and measure nature's deep significance. Tagore could penetrate into hidden meanings and recognize utterly unexpected relations of things and ideas.

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[46] *Chhelabela,* tr. Marjorie Sykes, Ray, Nihar Ranjan, *An Artist in Life*.p. 32.

He could see in a blade of grass the whole history of world evolution and read in it the endeavour of the earth to aspire to the sky. A large spectrum of human emotions illumined his heart.

A lively intuition made him susceptible to the unity that pervaded the universe and vouchsafed to him the vision of the ineffable. His soul throbbed in response to the harmony of the infinite with the finite.

An unusual capacity for hard work, a dedicated will, a consuming passion for freedom—inner and outer, and an uncompromising devotion to truth lifted Rabindranath, the supreme poet, above the artist to be the sentinel of human conscience.

Tagore was a self-educated, self-made man who throughout his life strove to make both his art and life perfect. He never ceased to experiment with music, poetry, drama, story-telling, painting, interpretation, politics, philosophy, education. He continued to enrich his personal experience and to mould his life in accordance with his ever widening perception of truth and reality.

During the first half of his life when he was pouring out lyrics of exquisite beauty he was laying a store of western and eastern knowledge. The poetry of the English romantics, the philosophy of enlightenment and positivism, the new science of evolution, furnished grist to his intellectual mill. The ancient Sanskrit lore, including the Vedas, the *Upanishads,* the *Mahabharata,* the *Ramayana,* the Buddhist literature and the drama and poetry of Kalidasa, were the mould which gave form and supplied pabulum to his genius. The song and verse of medieval Vaishnava saints and Bhaktas inspired him and modern Bengali literature supplied models for comparison and criticism.

Rabindranath lived at a time of fast developing crisis. Antagonisms between nations, inside nations, between empires and between imperial governments and their subjects, were fatefully moving towards world catastrophe. But the poet's sensitive response to the currents and eddies of the tragedy-oriented world rose above the growing turmoil. He saw a new world beyond the present travail and his intimate experience revealed to him a world of infinite joy and happiness. His heart was filled with unlimited love for man and joy in nature. The duality of experience inspired Tagore's poetry. In it was mingled the social tragedy of man with the inner rapture of the spirit. It stood bravely foursquare to the storm, though the evil of reality continued to block the flow of the stream of hope. Mental conflicts troubled him throughout life, but his intuition overcame the counsels of despair. Beyond them he found the certainty of truth the joy of discovering unity in the universe and harmony between nature and man, the conviction in the ultimate success of the ideal, disharmony in the phenomena of nature, the near meaninglessness of the world of pain, disease and death, and the senseless hate and cruelty in the relations of men. But Rabindranath was fortunate, for his *Jivandevata* (the inner guide) gave him the strength to cross the turbid floods and to attain the calm serenity of mind.

As he watched the world he found irreconcilable conflicts between the east and the west.. The very success of the west, its material superiority, its domination over the east, were to him the dreadful enemies of its true humanity. In India its past greatness cried out for the end of its present abasement.

His country background furnished him with a physical stage for his mental conflicts. The glaring contrast between the two Bengals moulded the growth of his mind. "There is a Bengal by the Ganges, a land of luxuriant vegetation, of fields of an incredible lushness, and greenness of pools where black and white kingfishers dart and hawk, of great white-headed kites sitting on telegraph wires and poles, of stretching sand-banks climbing out of the lazy stream to sun their broad backs, of drowsy, drifting sails, and of that mighty, worshipped river. . . He knows its rain-swollen currents, its dreadful roar and tussle of cloud and lightening and thunder, its exquisite peace and stillness, its vast spaces".[47]

"But there is the other Bengal, lifted out of the malaria-belt, dry and arid, a land where sandstone crops up, and laterite, where the jungle is *Sal* and mimosa and rough tangle of zizyph, with splits and fissures where dwarf date palms grow and *palas* crowds in spring with brick-red flowers."[48]

The first was the golden Bengal of Tagore's poetry, drama, story and romance, the second was the dour Bengal of harsh struggle against nature challenging man to subdue it for human benefit, and to provide an appropriate background for training the future citizens of India.

This emotional dichotomy gave Tagore his mission—the vision of unity among differences in mankind, of harmony within man tormented by conflicts, and of conciliation between man and nature. He became the advocate of the wholeness of man which comprehended all—the divine, the natural and the human. This was his religion. He arrived at it not only through logical and metaphysical reasoning,[49] but above them through personal experience.

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[47] Thompson, E..J, *Rabindranath Tagore, His Life and Works*, p. 7.

[48] *Ibid.*

[49] Tagore, Rabindranath, *The Religion of Man*, Chapter VI, The Vision.

It is not possible to identify such an individualist as Tagore with any established and known religious system or creed. Orthodox Hinduism with its gorgeous temples and complex ritual, its metaphysical doctrines of *Karma*—the cycle of birth and death, its hierarchical social system based on caste, he had already abandoned as a Brahmo. He lost interest in Brahmoism after his failure to reunite the Brahmo sects, He was dissatisfied with its standardization of truth and metaphysical rarefaction. The religions which prescribed asceticism and denied the world were of no use for him, nor could he approve of creeds which divided humanity into the two classes of the blessed who would attain paradise and the damned who would suffer eternally in the fires of hell.

For him religion consisted in the intense yearning of the soul for union with the divine, for realizing God within. He says, "The feeling which I always had was a deep satisfaction of personality that flowed with my nature through living channels of communication from all sides".[50]

He is the harbinger of the coming of the new man:

"There, there comes the Man Eternal and the dust and
flowers of this mortal earth are ashiver all round.
'Fear not, Fear not,' rings the call
from the peaks of the rising sun
the call of a new life
And the sky is rent asunder
by thousands of voices:
Victory, victory to the awakening of Man."[51]

From the direct vision which filled his soul with inner radiance of joy, important conclusions followed. The first was the primacy of intuition, imagination and feeling over intellect and reason. Intuition gave the knowledge of truth which was infinite, eternal and universal, the mystery of relation between love and joy. Intellect was bound by limitations of time and space, it gathered facts which nature (the bound world) supplied and organized them into systems of thought and science. It was not intellect but mind "which is occasionally made intensely conscious of an all pervading personality, answering to the personality of man".[52]

He defines personality as "a self-conscious principle of transcendental unity within man which comprehends all the details of facts that are individually his in knowledge and feeling, wish and will and work."[53] This personality has a negative aspect for it is limited to the separateness of the individual. But positively it extends into the infinite through expansion of knowledge, love and activity.

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[50] Dasgupta, S.K., *Rabindranath, the Poet and the Philosopher*, p. 64.

[51] Ray, Nihar Ranjan, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

[52] Tagore, Rabindranath, *The Religion of Man*, p. 102.

[53] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

The finite personality of the individual is an evolving manifestation of the surplus of the infinite personality of God. Thus the cycle of creation starts with the infinite, who puts himself out into the finite and the finite inevitably strives to return to its original self, *viz.*, the infinite. The finite is a process, an evolution of nature from the inanimate through the animate to man. But on arrival at this stage the natural evolution culminates and a new stage begins which goes beyond nature. He becomes its master who commands it to obey his will.

Thus man is a personality in quest of the higher personality. This quest urges the individual to identify himself with the infinity expressed through the multiplicity and variety of finite personalities' society. The process of identification is the path to perfection—the realization of the vision of the beyond—the good, the beautiful and the true. Man is the wayfarer who irrespective of race, colour, creed, and nationality is ever marching onwards to discover Man.

This is no dogmatic religion, no established theology. This is the religion of religions, the spirit which dwells in the heart of all religions. This religion frees man from bondage to all that is untrue, all that hinders the development of his personality. It lays emphasis on values that the traditional world denies.

Tagore rejected the fundamental doctrines of Hinduism. He did not believe in the mechanised view of *Samsara*—the cycle of births and deaths. According to him there could be no continuity of desires, passions, wealth and name in any future life; no chance of completing one life's unfinished task in the life hereafter; no persistence after death, for death closes the account of this life. He said, "I shall not come to them, with any claim for immortality." The only survival for him was rebirth in God through love.

He condemned the caste system and its basic concept of inequality of man. He repudiated the idea that the material world was a snare and life a journey through the vale of pain and sorrow. He disapproved of the ascetical view of life and the belief that man's perfection can be achieved through renunciation.

Nor was Tagore attracted by the strait-jacketed dogmas and doctrines of other religions. What he valued was compassion, love, sacrifice, service and truth and above all a striving for the realization of the perfect and the infinite through the evolution of personality.

Tagore's recognition that man's personality was identical with the divine personality in substance elevates the individual to the highest pinnacle of dignity. The idea of personality involved the freedom of man to attain through feeling, thought and action his highest destiny. Personality was man's charter of independence from whatever obstructed it, whether an inheritance from the past or a dogma of the present. It was the blast of the trumpet against social bondage and political subjection. Both through his powerfully moving verse and persuasive prose he taught his countrymen to be courageous, self-reliant, free, and worthy of the personality which they bore as men. In a famous song of his he challenges the Indian man:

> If hearing thy call, none follows,
> then, too, march on alone;
> March on alone, march on alone, march on alone.
> If no one speaks to thee,
> O thou, O thou, helpless one;
> If every one keeps his face turned,
> then, too, with open heart
> the message of thy soul speak with clarion
> voice alone.[54]

This spirit of personal religion and individual striving determined his attitude towards nature, man and society. For him the world was not unreal, not *maya* or illusion. On the contrary nature invited man to its bosom, for enjoyment, love and mastery. Tagore would not, like the medieval monk, close his eyes at the sight of the seductive panorama of the majestic snow-covered peaks when crossing the Alps, lest the soul become deluded by the temptation of material attractions. He would drink deep through all his senses the entrancing magic of colour, form and sound. Nature for him was a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. But nature is a companion as well as a slave. The mind of man pierces into the secrets of its power and utilizes it to assert his freedom. Thus he advances civilization.

The idea that nature was the manifestation of the reality reinforced the conception which is found in the *Upanishad* and in the songs of the medieval saints. For instance, the *Upanishad* says:

> "All this which moves in the moving universe is a worthy
> dwelling of the Lord."[55]

Kabir sings:

> "There falls the rhythmic beat of life and death;
> Rapture wells forth, and all space is radiant with light.
> There the unstruck music is sounded:

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[54] Tagore, Rabindra Nath.

[55] *Isha Upanishad.*

It is the live music of these worlds.
There millions of lamps of sun and moon are burning;
There the drum beats and the lover swings in play.
There love songs resound, and light rains in showers."[56]

The aspect of personality which Tagore is mainly concerned with is the feeling self, the living individual whose heart throbs with love. This is the spiritualized interpretation of the individualism of Rousseau and the English liberal philosophers of the nineteenth century. In this context and in the spirit of this liberal individualism the human world moves—society, state, nation, commerce, politics, war are to this world like the mist of abstractions. Tagore holds:

"Everywhere in man's world the Supreme Person is suffering from the killing of the human reality by the imposition of the abstract...... Once we accept as truth such a scientific maxim as "Survival of the Fittest" it immediately transforms the whole world of human personality into a monotonous desert of abstractions, where things become dreadfully simple because robbed of their mystery of life."[57]

It may not be possible to agree with this conception of the relation between the concreteness of the individual and the abstraction of society. Tagore himself has conceded that the individual has to search Personality through the multiplicity of personalities but he does not elaborate on this aspect of reality which is embodied in society.

However that may be, in the social milieu of India where the individual is bound hard and fast by dead social regulations it was necessary to emphasize the spontaneity and self-direction of the individual and to assert boldly the right of personality for self expression.

According to Tagore then the supreme end of man is perfection of personality—not by meditation alone, not by withdrawal from the world of strife and struggle, not by taking refuge in the inner cave of the mind, but by action, by unceasing endeavour to remove the dams which hold up in stagnant pools the fresh waters of life. His drama '*Muktadhara*' (The release of the stream) is built around this theme.

Like the *Bodhisatva*, the *Param Karunika* (the absolutely compassionate), he would say "not until every human being attains *Nirvana* can I enter *Nirvana* myself."

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[56] Tagore, Rabindranath, *One hundred Songs of Kabir.*

[57] Tagore, Rabindranath, *Personality*, p. 37.

Tagore's goal of salvation is attained through work and not through renunciation. He says:

> Salvation through renunciation, that is not mine, I shall get
> the blissful taste of it in the midst of innumerable bonds.

and again:

> How can I sit alone in my Samadhi (meditation) of salvation,
> if the universe passes by, weeping?[58]

Tagore lays emphasis upon the conviction that man is not bound by nature or necessity. No pre-ordained fate binds him. In fact he overflows with surplus energy which he uses to acquire knowledge in excess of his physical and biological needs and builds up magnificent systems of science and philosophy; he disposes a surplus of sympathy and fellow-feeling and produces codes of morality and principles of ethics; he commands an exuberance of imagination and feeling and by their instrumentality creates wonderful specimens of art. His unique gift of self-consciousness expresses itself in the form of religion. In short the magic of personality makes him select, create and build his own world of form, colour and movement, distinct from the world of abstract science, the world of mere utility relying on the data of limited organs of sense. In this difference lies the germ of divinity. This blossoms into the consciousness that not only is God needed by man, but that God equally needs man, so that the very existence of God is involved in that of man. Man is thus not only a receiver from God, but also a giver to him.

For the Indian people lying bound and prostrate at the feet of their proud rulers, the learning of such a lesson was a precondition of freedom.

All the poetry and prose which Tagore wrote during the last decade of the nineteenth and the first of the twentieth century is heavily charged with this message. Its leaven worked. It became the property of the proud and the lowly. Bengal was flooded with a new energy which broke forth early in the twentieth century and grew continuously in volume and speed and power dashing against the political obstacles in order to sweep them away.

Tagore was not a politician, he was a sage. He inspired a new spirit in the people. He was the prophet of a new era which still reposes in the womb of time. With all this, he was deeply concerned with the basic problems of the country, among which the Partition of Bengal was one. He became the torch-bearer of the movement against the Partition and his association with it gave it an all-India character. But he realized that politics was not enough, so he

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[53] Chakravarti, A., Mitra, S.K., Sen, Sachin, and Ray, Nihar Ranjan, *Rabindranath* (Greater India Series), p. 41.

founded the University of Visvabharati at Santiniketan with colleges of arts, sciences and agriculture (Sriniketan) to set up model institutions of national education.

Tagore's transition from the individual as a personality to society as a multipersonality is unsure. He seems sometimes to deny the concrete reality of society in the manner of English Utilitarians. He calls it an etatist dogma. But at other times he considers society as a multiple personality through whom the individual advances towards self-realization. or instance, in his lectures on 'Nationalism in the West', he defines society in these words:

> "Society as such has no ulterior purpose. It is an end in itself. It is a spontaneous self expression of man as a social being. It is a natural regulation of human relationships, so that men can develop ideals of life in co-operation with one another."[59]

This affirms the theory of man as social by nature and therefore contradicts the view that it is an abstraction, an artificial device for the effectuation of a deliberately chosen special objective.

He reinforces the idea of the naturalness of society by explaining its formation as "the expression of those moral and spiritual aspirations of man which belong to his higher nature."[60] These aspirations are two, "one is to regulate passions and appetites for the harmonious development of man; and the other is to help him cultivate disinterested love for his fellow creatures."[61] This is a restatement of the theory of Rousseau's *Contrat Sociale* and the idealists like Green and Bosanquet, for they hold that society is the social will of the individual, the embodiment of his rational or moral will—a theory which was attacked by the realists like Graham Wallas and Hobhouse.

Whether society is natural and organic or artificial and mechanical or a combination of both, it incorporates great moral values. Among them freedom is the foremost. It is basic to the development of man's personality. Tagore points out "the will which is free, must seek for the realization of its harmony with other wills which are also free, and in this is the significance of spiritual life."[62] Again he states, "the infinite centre of personality, which radiates its joy by giving itself out in freedom, must create other centres of freedom to unite with it in harmony. Beauty is the harmony realized in things which are bound by law. Love is the harmony realized in wills which are free."[63]

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[59] Tagore, Rabindranath, *Nationalism*, p.9.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 120.

[61] *Ibid.*

[62] Tagore, Rabindranath, *Personality*, p. 101.

In contrast with the natural society, the nation is an artificial structure. Tagore says: "A nation, in the sense of the political and economic union of a people, is that aspect which a whole population assumes when organized for a mechanical purpose."[64] This purpose is self-preservation which "is merely the side of power, not of humane ideals". Power accumulates, organization expands, competition and jealousy between nations and nations become deeper and bitterer. The nation replaces the harmony of the higher social life and becomes a menace and an evil. It becomes "an automation led by the power of greed" capable of shameful crimes.

Unfortunately, "this abstract, being the nation, is ruling India". This rule has no touch of humanity. Its agents "aid or hinder our aspirations from a disdainful distance"[65]; their "bloodless policy may pierce into the very core of our life, may threaten the whole future of our people with a perpetual helplessness of emasculation"[66]; Tagore adds, "In this reign of the nation, the governed are pursued by suspicion, and these are the suspicions of a tremendous mind and of organized brain and morale. Punishments are meted out which leave a trail of miseries across large bleeding tracts of the human heart. But these punishments are dealt by a mere abstract force, in which a whole population of a distant country has lost its human personality."[67]

It is a terrible indictment of British rule in India. But the lectures on 'Nationalism in the West' which he delivered in the USA in 1916 during the First World War supply ample ground to prove the truth of Tagore's condemnation of the Nation. The cruel bloodshed, the destruction of wealth, the ruin of priceless monuments and so far as India was concerned the tragic events of 1919, bear out his frightening forecasts.

It must, however, be admitted that Tagore's accusations are more relevant to the spectre of Imperialism which sprang out of the capitalistic nationalism of the nineteenth century than to nationalism as such.

Tagore had the courage to face the logic of this point of view which demanded that in the interest of humanity all imperialist systems must be abolished. All peoples in Asia, Africa or anywhere else in the world ought to be set free from the galling yoke of foreigners. The freedom of India must lead to the emancipation of other dependent lands all over the world. World society comprehending all humanity ought to be made possible. For universal freedom alone would assure the triumph of the personality of man, as it would change mechanical into humane relations. It would inaugurate the one world of the idealist dream. It would consummate the relation of man "from individual body to community, from community to universe, from universe to infinity"[68] When this universalism is attained, "then all else, the luxury of private wealth, the right of nations, will become subordinate: the spirit of man will triumph and its historic tasks will be completed".[69]

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[63] *Ibid.*

[64] Tagore, Rabindranath, *Nationalism*, p. 9.

[65] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[66] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[67] *Ibid.*

In the light of these ideals Tagore approached the problem of India, which had two aspects—one permanent and the other immediate. The immediate problem arose out of the partition of Bengal. The permanent problem related to such vital matters as the form of the future society and of the new culture in free India.

The solution of the long term problem depended upon (1) the understanding of the past—the genius and character of the people as disclosed in their history and thought, (2) the apprehension of the meaning and value of the cultural impact of the west, (3) the proper assessment of the moral effects of imperial domination over Indian society, and (4) the development of the necessary synthesis between the values of ancient India and modern European cultures, so that the old values may be preserved while adopting the requisite elements of western culture.

Rabindranath has a great deal to say on all these matters, but he considered the interpretation of Indian history basic for the determination of India's future. Unfortunately during the formative period of his life Indian historical studies were just in the initial stages and what is worse, they were largely pursued by Englishmen whose attitude was vitiated by the unscientific Victorian biases—white man's racial superiority over the coloured people and Christian contempt for Asiatic religious and social systems. It was but natural that self-respecting Indians should react violently against these unwarranted assumptions. Moreover, even today the corpus of facts concerning ancient Indian history remains meagre. In the late nineteenth century it was even more scanty. The consequence was that imagination had free play and romantic patriotic yearnings had uncharted field to romp about.

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[68] Tagore, Rabindranath, *Towards Universal Man*, p. 94.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 100.

Tagore could not escape from these handicaps. But his penetrating intellect drew inferences from the study of Sanskrit texts which cannot be lightly dismissed. Two of his main conclusions were:

(1) that the main tendency of Indian history throughout the ages was discovering unity in diversity; in other words reconciling of differences of race, cult, worship, custom and ideology; harmonization of divergent cultures into a synthesis;

(2) that the social order was primary and state and polity secondary in terms of human values. The relation between the two presented a struggle between freedom and love of self expression on the one hand, and order and conformity of organization, on the other.

The play of these tendencies and forces could be traced through the different stages of Indian history. According to Tagore the first stage was inaugurated by the advent of the Aryans. Its climacteric was reached with the decline of Buddhism. This period saw the endeavour to reconcile the Aryan and the non-Aryan, the Aryan and the Dravidian, and the assimilation of their cults, languages and customs. Simultaneously it witnessed the struggle of two opposite ideologies—Brahmin and Kshatriya. The Vedas—their many gods with Brahma at their head, the elaborate ritual of worship and sacrifice and the cult of Agni, the importance of the priest, the exclusiveness and rigidity of social order, the predominance of intellectualism in religion and the attitude of immutability of life, articulated the prominent features of Brahminism.

The Brahmin rishis like Yajnavalkya, Jamadagni and Vasishtha were the spiritual sponsors of the culture; Parashurama its one and only Brahmin Avatara; Drona, Kripa and Asvatthama the Brahmin warriors its military leaders in the war against the Pandavas. The Vedas and Smritis contained its religion and law.

The Kshatriya philosophy, religion and history were embodied in the Upanishads, *Bhagavad Gita, Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. They taught a monotheistic religion, symbolized in the Sun and manifested in the incarnations of Vishnu—Rama, Krishna and Gautama Buddha, all Kshatriyas. Yudhishtira, Arjuna and Krishna were the Kshatriya commanders in the Mahabharata war.

The Kshatriya religion was a religion of devotion and love, it taught an exalted ethics—freedom from desires, magnanimity and self-sacrifice. It was non-ritualistic and avoided the externalia of cults. Its great teacher was Krishna—a Kshatriya prince, and its popular scripture the *Bhagavad Gita*. Rama, a Kshatriya king, was its ideal character whose adviser and priest was Vishvamitra, a

Kshatriya-born *rishi.* Rama defeated Parashurama, the Brahmin hero, broke Siva's bow, subdued the barbarians, cleared the forests, brought the earth under the plough, won over the non-Aryans, adopted Guhaka the Chandala, and reconciled the north and the south.

Ultimately there was accommodation between Brahmanism and Kshatriyanism, and the Hindu trinity was constituted of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. Krishna, Rama, Buddha together with Parashurama were admitted into the list of God's incarnations. The Vedas, Upanishads, *Bhagavad Gita, Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* were all recognized as sacred books. Monotheism and polytheism lay cheek by jowl. The terrible blood-thirsty, death-dealing Rudra of the non-Aryan is identified with the freedom-loving king of the mystics, the lord of bliss, the Vedic Siva.

With the establishment of the Buddhist age a new chapter opened. Buddha spiritualized faith, promoted dynamism and expansion in life, broke down the narrow walls of separatism, taught compassion for the poor, the unfortunate and the unprivileged. He placed before men ideals of right conduct, self-denial, compassion and service.

But then the intrusion of the foreigners took place; the Sakas, Kushanas and Hunas rushed in and spread over northern India. A new synthesis then took place. The foreigners were Hinduized. But the assimilation was imperfect. The Aryan minority enfolded in the overwhelming non-Aryan majority led to the development of a rigid caste system, in which the organic unity of society was submerged. The differences of their cults were not removed and their diversities were united in mechanical juxtaposition. The old emphasis on faith, inner discipline and purity of morals was weakened and empty ritual and ceremonial and blind conformity took their place. Gross cults, degradation of large masses of people, lack of social cohesion, absence of love and pride became marked features of society.

The stage was set for a new act. The Central Asian tribes who had become converts to Islam began their incursions and swiftly overran the country. But in its essential character the Muslim rule was not unlike the Hindu. It was based on the same principle of the autonomy of society and the strictly limited authority of the state which was observed hitherto under Hindu kings. It gave a shock to the rigidity into which Hinduism had become enmeshed. Its stimulus promoted the *Bhakti* movement which sought to flush the stagnant waters of faith and morality with the life-giving and pure waters of the ancient teachings of Krishna and the Vaishnavites.

About the movement he says:

"In the history of our own middle ages, there was a religious conflict between the Hindus and the conquering Muslims. We also find at that time a succession of saints and devotees—many Muslims were among that galaxy—who bridged the gulf of religious differences by personal relationships.... They went where mankind finds its common and unchanging basis of unity, and they accepted as their motto that great truth which teaches us to see *all* as part of *ourselves* ....the deathless message of those saints and devotees is still running in the life-blood of the Indian people. If we could draw our inspiration from that source, we would see an improvement in our politics and economics and also a strengthening in our general plan of action."[70]

About the Mughals his view was:

"Mughal emperors were men, they were not mere administrators. They lived and died in India, they loved and fought. The memorials of their reigns do not persist in the ruin of factories and offices, but in immortal works of art—not only in great buildings, but in pictures and music and workmanship in stone and metal, in cotton and wool fabrics."[71]

But the Muslim civilization failed because in the first place, "it could not rouse the people into stirrings of thought or creative enterprise," and secondly because "they failed to make our vision reach out towards that world"[72]—the world beyond India.

So another blow was required to stir our attitude of complacency, for "we still viewed narrow horizons from the pavilions of our rural shrines."[73] The British administered the blow. "They came not simply as men but as the symbols of the new spirit of Europe.... On the personal plane these new comers remained further away from us than the Muslims, but as emissaries of the European spirit they made a contact with us wider and deeper than of all their predecessors."[74] Their success was due to their "integrity in the pursuit of truth." They were "not deluded by intellectual lethargy, illusive fancy, superficial resemblances, or the echoing of the old-age wisdom."[75]

The West has rendered invaluable services to India. It has given a new wealth of emotions to break the tyranny of man over man, "a set of values against which scriptural dispensations and age-old conventions labour in vain."[76] In the realm of intellect they extorted our

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[70] Tagore, Rabindranath, *Greater India*, quoted by Amiya Chakravarty, *Tagore Reader*, p. 198.

[71] Tagore, Rabindranath, *Personality*, p. 18.

[72] Tagore, Rabindranath, *Universal Man*, p. 342.

[73] *Ibid.*

[74] *Ibid.*

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 343.

[76] *Ibid.* p., 346.

"homage to illusion—free reason and in the realm of practical affairs to the rights of man."[77] Thus revolutionary changes took place in Indian thought and attitude.

Yet western civilization with its accent on the nation and imperialist domination with consequent human cruelties perpetrated in bare-faced pride, lost the respect of Asia. The British rule in India became a soulless machine, scornful of Indian opinion, self-assured and uncreative, colour-conscious and prejudicial, exploitative and repressive; "it is a steam-roller, formidable in its weight and power, having its uses but it does not help the soil to become fertile."[78]

Notwithstanding the seemingly unshakable power of British imperialism, "the immense dead-weight of British rule", and shortcomings of Indian people, Tagore drawing inspiration from India's past never faltered in his faith that India would rise one day, recover its spiritual strength and contribute its mite to the establishment of world unity. He said :

"I live today in the hope that the Saviour is coming, that he will be born in our midst in the poverty-shamed hovel which is India. I shall wait to hear the message he brings with him, the supreme word of promise he speaks unto man from this eastern horizon to give faith and strength to all who hear."[79]

He believed, "the turning of the wheel of fortune will compel the British one day to give up their Indian empire."[80]

He desired to see India free, not merely for the negative reasons that thraldom is immoral—a denial of human personality, not even because British domination had plunged the Indian masses into grinding poverty and untold misery, but for reasons which exalt man above all other creatures, "because she (India) has saved through tumultuous ages the living words of her great men"—"God is infinite, peace is in God, goodness is in God, and the unity of all beings is in God."[81]

But how did Tagore figure the lineaments of this freedom? The past of India indicated some important features, the experience of the modern west suggested what had to be avoided and what accepted, and his philosophy in which the values of human and divine personality were combined, also offered guidance.

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[77] *Ibid.*, p. 347.

[78] Sen, Sachin, *Political Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore*, p. 72.

[79] Tagore Rabindranath, *Towards Universal Man*, p. 359.

[80] *Ibid.*, p. 358.

[81] *Ibid.*, p. 196.

About the nature of the pre-British Indian civilization Tagore rightly held that it was society-oriented and not, like the modern European, state-oriented. This was for him a crucial difference. Society organized individuals in free associations for voluntary co-operation. The social and economic ties secured mutual benefits and promoted differentiation of functions. Even the rigid system of caste in India was originally founded on the ideas of mutual aid and occupation suited to ability—"Society divided according to ability, occupation" as the *Bhagavad Gita* states.[82] But afterwards the principles of heredity, race discrimination and caste hierarchy petrified the organization and transformed it into a powerful apparatus of evil.

State or polity introduces the element of obligation sanctioned by force. Tagore's nineteenth century liberalism required that the element of force ought to be kept to a minimum, in order to maximize the freedom of the individual and society. In the circumstances of India, where the force was wielded by an alien bureaucracy, even greater emphasis was needed upon society. He, therefore, advocated that more than political agitation what was required was the building up of a self-reliant, self-regulating, progressive society, and his concept of society was not the limited microscopic section of the educated urban middle class, but the vast majority of the Indian masses living in the villages. His idea apparently was to reduce the intervention of the Government in the life of the people, so as to make it eventually functionless, and thus to contrive the transfer of all authority into the hands of the people. The plan later adopted by Gandhiji reflected the ideas of Tagore.

It must, however, be pointed out that although Tagore's separation of society and state had relevance to the situation in the early twentieth century India, and was perhaps congruous to the conditions of Victorian England, it has no theoretical validity. Society and state are two faces of the same coin. In normal free societies the economic conditions and the general state of a country's affairs determine the limits of their authority, the spheres of their functioning. No a priori regulatory principles really apply. History has shown the relativity of such concepts as *Laissez faire*, negation of negations, self-regarding versus other-regarding action, and amenability or otherwise of motives to force or persuasion.

The view that the political order, manifested in the nation-state, was less natural than the order of society was responsible for the conclusions, namely, (1) that the eastern and western societies and cultures were radically different, (2) that the evolution of nationhood in India did not suit the Indian genius, and (3) that nationalism of the west had engendered the evils of imperialist domination over the weak, cut-throat competition among nations, jealousies, suspicions and war; that is, all the ugly international rivalries which contradicted and denied human values. It is not necessary to discuss Tagore's arguments in favour of these propositions for they are obviously exaggerated and one-sided.

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[82] *Bhagavad Gita*: IV (13)

The difference between the east and the west is not one of substance and quality but of degree. Eastern social evolution has been slower than western. From agrarian feudalism to mercantilism and from mercantilism to industrial capitalism the process has been continuous and steady in the west; on the other hand, Asian evolutionary process remained stagnant from about the thirteenth to the nineteenth century, till the shock of the west stirred it into action. The attribution of the spiritual to the one, and the material to the other is irrelevant, if not sheer vanity, dangerous self-delusion.

Tagore recognized the deplorable shortcomings of the contemporary Indian culture and the serious defects in Indian society. He was so impressed by the racial diversities of India and the communal and caste repulsions that he concluded, "India has never had a real sense of nationalism." He seemed to doubt whether the caste exclusiveness which raised moral "barriers against our race amalgamation will not stand in the way of our political unity."[83]

However, he loved India passionately and yearned for the release of the crores of helpless Indian people from the unimaginably powerful stranglehold of the so-called civilized British race and their salvation from that travesty of the human ideal, the aberration of the mentality of the imperial power. What he hoped for was an Indian nationalism not exclusive, nor aggressive, nor destructive, but health-giving, religious and therefore humanitarian. For him "the only path of deliverance is in the ideal of humanity."[84]

Tagore was apprehensive of nationalism and specially of its hate-inspired manifestations, but he was deeply interested in politics. For a period of 1905-1910, he was actively, almost exclusively, occupied with the movement for the annulment of the partition of Bengal. But begging for favours from the rulers or political mendicancy was hateful to him. Therefore, he placed before the country a practical programme of social reconstruction and self-reliant politics.

The rough and tumble of political agitation could hardly suit his refined, sensitive, truth-loving and discriminating personality. So he retired from the field and concentrated on national education in its widest significance. He was a believer in the primacy of social work and although he tended to deprecate the value of politics, he was undoubtedly right in laying emphasis on social uplift and education. But whenever occasion demanded he did not hesitate to express his opinion freely and regardless of the smiles or frowns of either his own countrymen or the Government. His dignified denunciation of Government on the barbarous massacre of Jallianwala Bagh and renunciation of the title of knighthood is an instance of the one, and the rebuke which he administered to Gandhiji on starting the movement of boycott and burning of foreign cloth, is an example of the other.

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[83] Tagore, Rabindranath, *Nationalism*, p. 106.

[84] Tagore, Rabindranath, Letter to a friend.

His constructive social work was inspired by high ideals of righteousness and humanity. He desired to recover and reinvigorate the spiritual traditions of India and at the same time to synthesize the basic principles of western and eastern cultures. Though he was extremely critical of some aspects of the west he was generous in his appreciation of its contribution to knowledge—science, mastery over the forces of nature for promoting human welfare. He had high respect for individuals everywhere in the world who worked for propagating ideals of human unity and brotherhood of man.

One of the many problems which faced India—that of unity or communal harmony, was of the utmost importance. He realized, "Hindus and Muslims have for centuries been nurtured by the same motherland and yet how far apart are we still." But he saw, "until the defects in our character which make this possible are removed, difficulties will dog us at every step of our political career and we shall not be able to bring to fruition any of our great endeavours."[85]

He was sure "if we could overcome our internal dissensions, we shall be able to laugh at all attempts from outside to set us against one another."[86] In his opinion a disparity existed between the numbers of the educated Hindus and Muslims resulting in Hindus obtaining a larger share in the services and patronage. "Unless it is removed, we cannot be really one at heart."[87]

He argued against Hindu prejudices about Muslim rule and contrasted them with the British and said, "But the British government in India is not personal. It is official and therefore an abstraction. It has nothing to express in the true language of art."[88]

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[85] Tagore, Rabindranath, *Towards Universal Man*, p. 105.

[86] *Ibid.*

[87] *Ibid.*, p. 106.

[88] Tagore, Rabindranath, *Personality*, p. 18.

On the other hand, "Hindus and Muslims constitute the two major communities of India. We must be prepared to show the sacrifice, the patience, the care and the self-restriant that are needed to unite them into a common political organization."[89]

It was unfortunate that inner prejudices had kept them apart. "To the Hindu, the Mussalman is impure; for the Mussalman, the Hindu is an infidel." These prejudices, which are contrary to the Indian genius of harmony, the historical spirit of reconciliation of differences of race and religion, must vanish before the advancing sentiment of love for India.

Love of the country, love of the Indian people, pride in its great past, pride in its human culture, faith in its future—such was Tagore's message to India. But Tagore looked beyond the nation to humanity. He said:

"And yet I will persist in believing that there is such a thing as the harmony of completeness in humanity, where poverty does not take away her riches, where defeat may lead to victory, death to immortality, and where in the compensation of eternal justice those who are the last may yet have their insult transmuted into a golden triumph."[90]

V. M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji was the supreme leader of the unique non-violent movement which carried India to the goal of independence. On his seventy-fifth birthday, October 2, 1944, he received messages of loving greetings and high tributes of admiration from many eminent persons some of whom were renowned all over the world for their contribution to science, philosophy, literature and statesmanship. Among them one was from Einstein the greatest living scientist of the age. He wrote about Gandhiji:

"A leader of his people, unsupported by any outward authority; a politician whose success rests not upon craft, nor mastery of the technical devices, but simply on the convincing power of his personality; a victorious fighter, who has always scorned the use of force; a man of wisdom and humility, armed with resolve and inflexible consistency, who has devoted all his strength to the uplifting of his people and the betterment of their lot; a man who has confronted the brutality of Europe with the dignity of the simple human being, and thus at all times risen superior. Generations to come, it may be, will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon the earth."[91]

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[89] Tagore, Rabindranath, *Towards Universal Man*, p. 106.

[90] Tagore, Rabindranath, *Nationalism*, p. 1380.

In order to understand the course and character of the extraordinary movement launched, directed, and sustained by this truly inimitable person, and to appreciate the importance of the utterly incredible and unprecedented methods he pursued, it is necessary to analyze the nature and sources of the amazing influence which he exercised over the minds of the Indian people as well as his numerous admirers abroad.

Gandhiji is an unusual phenomenon in the history of humanity. The world called him *Mahatma*—the great soul, although he repeatedly and with almost anguishing humility repudiated the title. But the fact remains that it is difficult to find a parallel in history of a man who could both rouse the millions to offer the supreme sacrifice which one is capable of and to call a halt when he felt that they were exceeding the limits, and violating the rules of non-violence. Nothing shows more convincingly the supreme exaltation of his moral principles than his recall of the excited and enthusiastic campaigns when they appeared to be moving towards a crescendo. He was misunderstood by his nearest and dearest comrades, abused by his hostile critics and almost disowned by those who cared for ends regardless of means employed to achieve them.

While his achievements during his own lifetime and for India were undoubtedly so remarkable as to entitle him to a place in the front rank of historical celebrities, his teaching of truth and non-violence and his own sublime example bear upon them the stamp of immortality. Whether he is ranked among the prophets or not, the purity of his personal life, the universality of his love for man, his unswerving faith in human goodness and his uttermost dedication to truth mark him out as one of those rare souls whose appearance from time to time blesses and ennobles mankind.

Gandhiji was born and brought up in a period of exceptional stress and strain in the life of India. Politically the relations between the rulers and the ruled were of bitter hostility—arrogance and contempt on the one side and anger and servility on the other. The rulers were heedless of the opinion of the ruled whom they treated as inferior in intellect and character and therefore unworthy of trust and responsibility. On the other hand, Indians belonging to the intellectual and well-to-do classes suffered from a sense of helplessness and humiliation, which occasionally erupted in futile conspirary and terrorism.

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[91] Tendulkar, D.G. *Mahatma*, Vol. VI, pp. 357-8.

In 1885 the Indian National Congress was inaugurated to give to the prevailing discontent a constitutional organ of expression. But the years rolled by and the Congress resolutions evoked little response from the Government. Towards the close of the century the earlier hopes were fading and the enthusiasm was waning. New and more clamant voices were beginning to be heard which advocated more vigorous action.

If the public life was agitated and distressed the reasons were not merely political. They were to a large extent economic. The imperialist policies which inhibited industrial advance, depressed domestic crafts and arts, and impoverished and disorganized village life, created widespread misery which provided the motive force to public agitation.

This state of affairs was reflected in the moral and intellectual spheres. The life in India during this period was a curious medley. Modernism with its emphasis upon intellect and reason, dignity and freedom of the individual and nationalism as the highest form of social organization evoking the citizen's loyalty in return for the widest opportunities of self-realization and service, was gradually spreading. But the process was slow and uneven. The country was enormous both in area and population. It was also poor and illiterate. Highly civilized and proud of the inheritance of the noblest values of life, it was endeavouring to revive their reality in contemporary life.

But the ordinary people held these values uncritically by custom and habit. Tradition alone was rampant and even the western educated who had acquired some veneer of western science, philosophy, history and literature, carried an underlying hard core of belief and doctrine which criticism and argument had not touched.

In the large towns with university trained professionals there might be coteries of westernized folk copying western externalia in their ways and manners, but on the whole their minds—especially in their social and religious context, were steeped in antiquity and medievalism. The admixture of eastern conservatism and western liberalism was ill assorted and mechanical. The effort to create an organic unity or a rational fusion of the two different outlooks had achieved little success.

The extremists among the radicals were advocates of the rejection of the old, lock, stock and barrel. The extremists among the conservatives wished to erect a dead Chinese wall which would shut out modernism completely. Neither group realized the futility of the attempt.

But there were arising many middle-of-the-road schools of though, which attempted to combine the past with the present, east with west, in various proportions. Some were eclectic revivalists who held the past of India in the highest esteem in the belief that India had attained a lofty spiritual culture during those times, though in later times decline set in. The task before them was to remove the excrescences, restore the pristine purity and, at the same time, to graft on this ancient culture whatever of value was found in the modern west.

There were others who did not entirely agree either with the estimate of the ancient culture or the idea of grafting. According to them society is a changing, evolving organism which keeps growing in integration and differentiation. It absorbs elements from other cultures which it finds useful. While the social process of assimilation and rejection is continuous the rationalization of the process is never complete and therefore the thinkers, philosophers and *litterateurs* find themselves in doubt and uncertainty. But the activists who cannot afford to be sceptical, make up their minds and proceed to work on their conclusions—logical or otherwise. Among the leaders of thought and action, some are conservative, others liberal and still others revolutionary.

Tilak, Tagore, Gandhi, Aurobindo and Jawaharlal Nehru were the typical representatives of these schools.

Gandhiji was born in Porbandar, a coastal town in Kathiawar facing the Arabian Sea, on October 2, 1869, in a well-to-do Vaishya family. His father Karamchand Gandhi was an influential person. He had held the high office of Chief Minister in the small States of Porbandar, Rajkot and Wankaner. He had been a member of the Rajasthani Court at Rajkot which adjudicated upon disputes between the chiefs and their fellow clansmen. But he had not accumulated wealth nor acquired much property, and was relatively poor. He was, however, a man of strong will and high principles. Gandhiji describes him as "a lover of his clan, truthful, brave and generous." He was incorruptible, strictly impartial, and of proven loyalty to his master.

Gandhiji inherited all these qualities from his father. His mother was a saintly and deeply religious woman. Her routine consisted of daily prayers and visits to the Vaishnava temples, fasting during the four rainy months, taking hard vows prescribed for pious Hindus and keeping them regardless of ill health or other obstructions. There is little doubt that she passed on these characteristics to her youngest son.

His early life divides itself into three phases of different time lenghts. In the first phase, of a growing child and school-going adolescent, may be discerned the lineaments of heredity and effects of environment. This phase lasted from 1869 to 1888, when he proceeded to England for legal studies.

The second phase was a short one of less than three years. But these years were decisive in moulding his intellect and character and determining his future career. In the middle of 1891, he returned to India and spent nearly two years to settle down without success.

The third period from 1893 to 1915 was of extraordinary importance. It was the period during which he converted his intellectually held ideals into practical life. The events of the great struggle which he led in South Africa were indeed his experiments with truth. He passed through the blazing furnace of a prolonged moral war which had not only tremendous social and political effects for the community but possessed even greater importance for Gandhiji's spiritual growth. The crude iron was turned into steel, the brass into burnished gold. In following the development it is necessary to indicate the part which the factors of heredity, environment and experience played in his life. For the early career cast the shadows of coming events.

As a boy at school he was shy, lonely, neither much interested in school studies nor in games and physical exercise. But he possessed an instinctive love of truth, honesty and integrity of a high order. He refused to correct his spelling mistake in an inspection even at the prompting of his teacher. He was compassionate and forgiving. He showed strong carnal passion and suffered the pangs of jealousy, but his affection for and devotion to his father were touching. He loved his mother intensely. Even in his tender years he displayed an unusual predilection for frankness and hatred for concealment or deception. He erred but had the rare courage to confess his misdeeds although the confession caused him excruciating pain.

What is really surprising about his character is that although he lived in a most conservative milieu, he had an experimenting spirit, an independence of mind which did not hesitate to try new ways. For example, when he was told that eating of meat was necessary for the independence of India, the hereditary taboos were thrust aside and for a whole year he continued to experiment with meat diet. This was done without the knowledge of his parents, but the young lad's conscience was so troubled by secrecy that eventually he made a clean breast of it and asked for forgiveness of his father. This was readily granted. The experiment ended, but the idea continued to lurk in the mind. He tried experiments on himself and on others, for even as a pupil at school he had a penchant for reforming others. It was this proclivity which led him to the brink of disaster. But the failure in this case had no effect and the tendency became stronger as years passed.

The spirit of experiment lasted throughout life so that he called his autobiography, "The Story of My Experiments with Truth". The experiments throw light upon one of the most outstanding traits of Gandhiji's personality.

He had the capacity—rare among men, of translating his resolves into immediate action unmindful of the cost. He had no hesitation in wagering even his life in order to fulfil his vows. No sooner did the truth flash across his mind than the appropriate action followed with a certainty which nothing could shake. He possessed an amazing tenacity; no failure or distraction could turn him from his aim.

Gandhiji inherited the religious leanings from his mother. Now the religious consciousness may be likened to mathematical, poetical or musical genius, which a great many people possess to a degree, some more and some less, but only a few are endowed with it in an exceptional measure. Gandhiji was one of them. But the full bloom of this came later.

The religion of his early age was nebulous in the extreme. He was enraptured on hearing the *Ramayana* sung by a Pandit before his father. He listened to the religious discussions between his father and the followers of other religions—Jain, Muslim and Parsi. He visited the temples of Vishnu as well as those of Siva and Rama in the company of his mother who occasionally took him to a temple of the Prannathi Sect, where no image was installed, the walls bore inscriptions of Quranic verses and priests wore non-Hindu dress and prayed in non-Hindu style. Then he imbibed the spirit of toleration for all faiths, although Christianity repelled him. Similarly the reading of *Manusmriti* did not evoke any favourable response, and visits to temples made little appeal to him. The religious experience did not yet awaken in him a living faith in God. On the contrary it inclined him towards atheism.

But the mould of his mind was so fashioned by nature and heredity as to make religion the greatest urge of his life. Therefore, although the religious consciousness still lay beneath the threshold, the conviction had grown "that morality is the basis of things and that truth is the substance of all morality." Truth became the sole objective to pursue and according to the later formulation, truth was identified with God , God with truth. To return good for evil grew into a passion.

Gandhiji like all Indian young men yearned to visit England, for he looked upon England as "the land of philosophers and poetry, the very centre of civilization".[92] But his mother, weighed down by old prejudices against crossing the black waters, would not allow him to go till he had taken three vows—to abstain from meat, wine and women. The callow youth of nineteen arrived in September 1888 in an England which was then in the throes of a social revolution. The

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[92] Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi, the Early Phase*, p. 224.

Victorian period was ebbing out and new forces and ideas were flowing in. Britain's industrial hegemony was challenged, free trade which for half century had been the basic faith of all political parties was attacked, the birth of socialist concepts which led to the formation of the Labour Party later, posed a problem to the old established two-party system. The Home Rule movement of Parnell was in full swing. Non-conformist ideas, American transcendentalist philosophies like those of Emerson, Walt Whitman and Thoreau, were questioning the liberalism of Bentham, Mill and Green. Ruskin and Thoreau were preaching new gospels of naturalism and simplicity. Tolstoy was propagating a shatteringly new interpretation of Christianity. Vegetarians, faddists, individualists, Home Rulers, Little Englanders, theosophists, mystics and perfectionists were administering shocks to the well-established Victorian complacency and self-esteem.

Gandhiji arrived in England with his undefined longings, vague ideas and uncertain beliefs. His knowledge was pathetically limited, for he did not believe in acquiring knowledge for its own sake. He would study books only in order to support his life's activities and chosen aims. His Indian experience was confined to a provincial society dwelling in a far corner of the country, remote from the stir and bustle of the Presidency towns. He had not attended even a university college which might have broadened his outlook. He knew little about western manners and ways of living. His raw nature, talent and emotional equipment were nearly all his mental capital when he landed at Plymouth in fog and rain. His immediate objective was to obtain a qualification which would help in earning a decent living and perhaps put him into the shoes of his father's calling. He entertained no higher aims at this time. In order to become a successful barrister he thought he should strive to become an English gentleman and joined the Inner Temple.

Little did he realize that he was not suited by nature to play this role. His vows were unknowingly placing serious impediments in his way, and all his instincts and subconscious wishes were pushing him in the opposite direction. Destiny called him to pursuits which he had never dreamed of.

His vow of vegetarianism led him out of his craze for a fashionable life; and step by step he advanced towards a new life of frugality, simplicity, naturalness, service, human brotherhood and religious convictions.

What is more he learnt that intuition alone was not sufficient, that its deliverance must be validated by principles of reason and morality.

The short stay of less than three years affected a transformation in the young Gandhi. His doubts about religion were lifted, he had crossed the sahara of atheism and he had become convinced of the overwhelming necessity of religion, although he was not sure of which one religion. He had acquired a new philosophy of society and learnt the scientific and rational explanation for the rules of living. He came into contact with vegetarians like Salt; advocates of simple life and humanitarian outlook like Edward Carpenter, Edward Maitland and Howard Williams; Socialists like Bernard Shaw, Sidney Oliver (who became the Secretary of State for India in the first Labour Government), Keir Hardie and Ramsay MacDonald; mystics and visionaries like Maitland and Anna Kingsford; the founders of the Theosophical Society Madam Blavatsky, Col. Olcott and Mrs. Annie Besant and the Christian preacher Dr. Parker; sceptics like Bradlaugh; and naturopaths Dr. Allinson, Dr. Josiah Oldfield and many others. They represented a typical phase of European culture. In the words of Edward Carpenter, "the whole structure of civilization, morality, is being rapidly undermined. The moral aspects of Property, Commerce, Class-relations, Sex-relations, Marriage, Patriotism and so forth are shifting like dissolving vistas. Nietzsche has scorched up the old Christian altruisms; Bernard Shaw has burned the decalogue."[93] The contacts whetted the appetite.

His selective studies confirmed him in his unorthodox views. For apart from his law books he read avidly the literature on new life and new movements.

In England he came to acquaint himself with Indian thought through Edwin Arnold's *The Song Celestial*—a free rendering of the *Bhagavad Gita*, and the *Light of Asia*, the life of Gautama Buddha. On theosophy he read Madam Blavatsky's *Key to Theosophy*. He read the *Bible* and was highly impressed by the Sermon on the Mount. Carlyle's chapter on 'Hero the prophet' in his book *Heroes, Hero-worship and the Heroic in History* introduced him to the life of Muhammad and Islam.

It was, however, his experience as distinguished from knowledge which removed his uncertainty and confirmed his faith in religion. When difficulties appeared insuperable, changes in the way of living seemed importunate, and temptations brought him to the brink of moral disaster, he felt "a knowledge of religion as distinguished from experience, seems but chaff in such moments of trial."[94] He thought he would have been lost if the grace of God had not saved him.

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[93] *Ibid*, p. 238

[94] Gandhi, M.K., *Autobiography*, p.98.

In addition to religion his interest was aroused in social, political and personal problems. He found scientific and rational grounds for his practices—vegetarianism, temperance, control of senses and avoidance of pleasure. The questions of birth control, woman, labour, capital and government drew his attention. He became deeply interested in the social problem of poverty and the means of bringing about social change. His instinctive individualism and rationalism developed the critical approach towards custom and tradition and strengthened the attitude of non-conformism towards religions, and social and political orthodoxies.

In 1891 Gandhi returned to India. He had been called to the Bar and enrolled as an advocate of the High Court. He had acquired the right to practise in India. But for a person of Gandhi's temper and attitude of mind conditions were not very congenial, and for two years he tried to settle down in Bombay and Rajkot but without success. But these years were important in the development of his mind for he came under the influence of a learned, thoughtful and saintly Jain scholar by the name of Rajchandra Ravjibhai Shatavadhani. He advised Gandhiji to study the *Bhagavad Gita* and continued to guide him in the quest of truth. Himself a Jain he had studied Hinduism, Christianity and Islam deeply and he refrained from suggesting any change of religion.

Finding that the prospects in India were bleak Gandhiji accepted the offer of Dada Abdulla & Co., Natal, to retain him as a legal adviser in a case pending before the courts. In April 1893 Gandhiji sailed for South Africa. He had reckoned that he would return after a few months, but months prolonged into years and years into decades. He was able to bid final farewell to South Africa after 22 years.

Within a few days of his arrival he met with a soul-searing experience which was not only extremely humiliating to him personally, but which inflicted deep wounds on his sense of national honour. Rudely awakened he resolved to redress the wrong of racial prejudice and uplift the status of Indians. Personal interest was merged into public duty; and the demands of his self-imposed tasks held him bound to South Africa till they were satisfied. The whole period of twenty-two years was filled with thrilling events and extraordinary experiences of an unexampled epic struggle.

The story of the resistance divided itself into two parts. The first part covers the years from 1894 to 1906 when the South African States were treated as the colonies of the United Kingdom. The second part begins with the change in the political status from colony to autonomy in 1906, and ends with the Gandhi-Smuts agreements of 1914.

During the first part the movement was largely concerned with the threat of disenfranchisement of Indians, and the imposition of a poll-tax of £3 per annum. Such measures as these were highly discriminatory and extremely galling to Indians' self-respect. Gandhiji decided to resist them and called upon his countrymen to join in the struggle. He organized the movement with "relentless pervasive energy", "with a fearful staying power and meticulousness of detail", deriving his strength from his dedication to Truth. The effect was that the proceedings in Transvaal were stayed.

But the relief was temporary. No sooner had Transvaal and the Orange Free State received the right of self-government than the Registration Act was passed and other humiliating measures threatened. Gandhiji's response was the revival of the civil disobedience movement which culminated in the march of thousands of Indian men, women and children into Natal. Then negotiations were started and at last a commission to inquire into Indian grievances was set up. The Indian demands to end the £3 tax, to recognize Indian marriages, to ease the immigration and residence controls and to terminate the indenture system were met. In June 1914, the Indian Relief Bill was passed and the South African struggle brought to a close.

It was a triumph for Gandhiji. Gokhale attributed it to the magic spell which converted the common labourers into heroes. He remarked, "Gandhi has in him the marvellous spiritual power to turn ordinary men around him into heroes and martyrs."[95] An embarrassed Smuts was obliged to admit:

"I do not like your people (Indians), and do not care to assist them at all. But what am I to do? You helped us in our days of need—How can we lay hands upon you? I often wish you took to violence like the English strikers and then we would know how to dispose of you. But you will not injure even the enemy; you desire victory through self-suffering alone and never transgress your self-imposed limits of courtesy and chivalry. And that is what reduces us to sheer helplessness."[96]

It is not possible to deal in this volume with all the marvellous movements led by Gandhiji in South Africa. But the leader of the freedom struggle in India was so much the product of his South African experiences that in order to understand his work in India it is necessary to take account of what he did and learnt in South Africa.

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[95] Tendulkar, D.G, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 159.

[96] Polak, K. St., *Visva Bharti Quarterly*, Gandhi Memorial Peace Number, p. 118.

Gandhiji had already arrived at certain convictions before he left England. One of them was his firm belief in the necessity of religion. But he was not clear as to what religion was the best. He started on this search in the company of his Christian acquaintances. His business led him to Pretoria where he met A.W. Baker, the attorney who was in charge of the case of his client and who was also a lay preacher. Gandhiji told him, "I do not know where I am, and what is and what should be my belief. I intend to make a careful study of my own religion and, as far as I can, of other religions as well."[97]

Baker who was a Director of the South Africa General Mission introduced him to the Sunday prayer and to the members of the group—one of whom was Coates, a Quaker. He recommended the reading of the *Bible*, Parker's *Commentary* and Butler's *Analogy* among the books. Although he became acquainted with Christian theological literature, he remained unconvinced. He attended also a Christian revivalist conference at Wellington. The devotion of the members impressed him, but the Christian dogma that Jesus was the incarnate son of God and the only Saviour of man did not appeal to him. He read about 80 books on religion during his stay in Pretoria in 1893. Among them were Edward Maitland's *The Perfect Way*, a repudiation of the current Christian belief and also his *The New Interpretation of the Bible* and Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, which impressed him deeply. About it he said, "Before the independent thinking, profound morality, and the truthfulness of the book all the books given to me by Mr. Coates seemed to pale into insignificance."[98] Gandhiji later admitted, "Reading it cured me of my scepticism and made me a firm believe in Ahimsa."[99]

At the end of 1893 Gandhiji returned from Pretoria to Durban on his way to India. But he was persuaded to stay on as he realized that new threats menacing the very existence of the Indian residents in South Africa, demanded his presence.

In Durban his religious studies continued. He collected a number of the writings of Tolstoy in his library and studied them with great attention. He regarded himself as "a humble follower of that great leader as one of my guides."[100] The fact of the matter is that Gandhiji owed much of the content of his mind including not only religion, but also the philosophy of personal conduct, society and state to Tolstoy. What is more he applied the same critical method to his religious beliefs especially of the Hindu faith, as Tolstoy had done in the interpretation of Christianity. Gandhi like Tolstoy rejected in Hinduism what failed to satisfy his reason or moral sense.

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[97] Gandhi, M.K. *Autobiography*, p. 151.

[98] *Ibid.*, p. 172.

[99] Pyrelal, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 627.

[100] *Ibid.*, p. 628.

His correspondence with Maitland of the Esoteric Christian Union strengthened his unorthodox approach. The result was that he not only overcame his early repugnance, but became a great admirer of the truth of Christianity without subscribing to its dogmas.

Besides the study of the Christian religion, Gandhiji was most anxious to learn what Hinduism was. His studies had been very cursory so far. But now he took them up seriously, and in this he took the guidance of Rajchandbhai, who suggested to him a course of reading and answered the many questions which he asked. The questions are most interesting as they throw light upon the problems which were occupying his mind at this time. They included all the usual religious topics—nature of God, universe and man and their relations; liberation (*moksha*) and its means; the existence of evil. But some questions were indicative of his special doubts—the Hindu belief in incarnations; the divine nature of the Vedas; the divinity of the Hindu sacred books, and the scriptures of the Christians and Muslims; the comparative position of various religions and their exclusive claims to truth; and the Christian dogmas of trinity and infallibility.

Gandhiji's readings included the *Upanishads*; Max Muller's *What India Can Teach Us;* the *Yogasutras* of Patanjali; the six systems of philosophy *(Sad Darshana);* the *Yogavasishtha* and the *Bhagavad Gita.* The last was his spiritual reference book. It contained for him the essence of the Hindu religion, as in his opinion the first verse of the *Isha Upanishad* was its epitome.

Rajchandra was a Jaina. He explained to Gandhiji the peculiar Jaina theories of knowledge and relativity of truth, *ahimsa* (non-violence) and the value of vows.

The Muslim friends induced Gandhiji to study Islam. He read Sale's translation of the *Quran* and Irving's *Life of the Prophet Muhammad,* besides Carlyle's chapter on Muhammad in *Heroes and Hero Worship.* He read also the *Sayings of Zarathushtra.* Gandhiji had made earnest efforts to understand the truth of all religions, but his aim was not philosophical or theological. He was a man of action and he was in search of principles which he could lay hold of as a firm basis of life. He wanted to find the rational justification for his vague, intuitive leanings. The comparative study of religions ended his quest for one perfect and supreme religion. He came to the conclusion:

"Personally I believe that in relation to their respective devotees, all religions are perfect. So far as the rest are concerned, they are all imperfect. Independently considered, all religions are perfect as well as imperfect. For after one has attained a certain stage of spiritual development, even the prescriptive formulas of the Shastras become a fetter on further progress.

...Therefore, it is not necessary in our workaday world for anyone to give up his own religion and adopt another in order to obtain liberation. Everybody can obtain liberation by following his own. For liberation means complete freedom from all attachment and hatred and this is the common goal of all religions."[101]

These conclusions were confirmed by the experiences he gathered during the troubles and tribulations of the magnificent struggle waged during the long stay of twenty-two years in South Africa.

Each occasion of personal humiliation or wrong and every step in the movement for the vindication of national honour and redressal of grievances was accompanied with a psychological reaction, a change in the way of life or a vow of renunciation. In Gandhiji's terminology they were his experiments with truth. They involved such matters of personal behaviour as diet, clothes, health and hygiene, cure of illness, household chores (house-keeping), useful arts and handicrafts, prayer. Their details and techniques were tested in retreats (*ashrams*) like the Phoenix Park which was established in 1904. and the Tolstoy Farm, started in 1910. The tense life lived in South Africa was like processing through a fiery furnace which imparts temper to steel.

By the time the sojourn in South Africa had ended life had become hard by a self-imposed iron discipline. The five-fold vow prescribed by the *Yoga Sutras* and Jain authorities had been accepted and actually put into parctice, and a comprehensive philosophy had been evolved to regulate personal life and human relations, and indicate the goal of society, economy and government. The grand structure of the ideological system rested on the foundation of religion.

Gandhiji considered religion as the be-all and end-all of life. He often repeated the idea in different words. Some of his remarks were:

"Religion must govern all life,"[102] "My heart, word and deed are pledged to the Being called God," "God rules every breath",[104] "The whole of my life is saturated with the religious spirit....My politics and all other activities of mine are derived from my religion."[105]

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[101] *Ibid.*, p. 331.

[102] *Harijan*, December, 29, 1933, Hingorani, H.T, *All Religions are True:* extracts from Writings and Speeches of M.K. Gandhi, p. 165.

[103] *Harijan*, February 2, 1934. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

[104] *Harijan*, March 2, 1934. *Ibid.*, p. 172.

[105] *Ibid.*

When one lives at such exalted heights and brings all his activities into harmony with one all-comprehending ideal, he has to be judged by standards not applicable to ordinary men.

Gandhi's politics become an enigma if considered apart from his religious background.

It has, however, to be remembered that Gandhiji's mind was not static. In some ways he was extremely self-critical, constantly revising, amplifying and modifying his ideas. In fact, he regarded all religions subject to development, from one view all were perfect and from another all imperfect, but advancing towards perfection.

During his stay in South Africa, for instance, he laid emphasis upon the ethical side of religion, on truth, non-violence, civil resistance and dignity of man. He adjusted his personal life to the five vows which constituted the foundation of religious living. Truth (*satya*) and non-violence (*ahimsa*) were the kernel of religion; but the vow of non-stealing (*asteya*) enjoined abjuring all that was in excess of the bare needs of subsistence; continence or sex-control (*brahmacharya*) was necessary not only for the utilization of physical energy in the service of human welfare, but also to obtain mastery over one of the strongest urges towards sensual enjoyment; then non-possession (*aparigraha*) or relinquishment of the desire for property.

In accord with the vows he reduced his wants to a minimum, gave up reliance on others as far as his personal needs were concerned, simplified his food, clothing and housing, abandoned his marital duties, relinquished his profession and devoted all his time and energy to public service.

Gandhiji recognized the essential unity and equality of all religions. He held that every religion was revealed by God, that the messengers of God—*Avataras* and Prophets, who were men of lofty character were the instruments of revolution. But being human their understanding and expression of the divine message naturally differed because of their personalities and the contingencies of time and country.

Thus though the religions have a common basis, they have different superstructures. Truth and non-violence were the common foundation of all.

The idea of unity in essentials and diversity in accidentals was derived from two sources—Hindu *Advaitavada* (nonduality) and Jain *Syadvada* (conditional predication or probabilism).

He expressed these views in the articles which he contributed to his papers. The statements which bear these ideas out are as follows:

"I have come to the conclusion that if it is proper and necessary to discover an underlying unity among all religions, a master key is needed. That master key is that of Truth and Non-violence."[106]

"All Truth represented by imperfect humans that we are is relative. We can each act according to our lights."[107]

"Everything has to submit to the test of reason. And, in the long run, it will be found that any other method would land us in trouble."[108]

"There are undoubtedly things in the world which transcend reason. We do not refuse to bring them on the anvil of reason but they will not come themselves. By their very nature they defy reason."[109]

"I believe in *Advaita,* I believe in the essential unity of man."[110]

"Every one is right from his own standpoint, but it is not impossible that everybody is wrong."[111]

"I am an *Advaitist* (nondualist) and yet I can support *Dvaitism* (dualism).... I have, therefore, no objection to calling it (world) real and unreal, and thus being called an *anekantavadi* (many-sided realist) or *syadvadi*.... It has been my experience that I am always true from my point of view and am often wrong from the point of view of my honest critics.... I very much like this doctrine of manyness of reality."[112]

While *Syadvada* gave Gandhiji a catholicity of view and a magnanimity of attitude in judging men—friends and foes, institutions, and religions, his *advaitism* was responsible for his belief in the unity of God, of man, religions and the universe. He was never tired of pointing out that all religions were perfect as well as imperfect and yet all were evolving towards perfection. The fact is that above external manifestations he really cared for the inner substance and significance of religion. He was essentially a mystic. Although he did not talk much about his mystical experiences, there are numerous references to the inner voice which in all crises and agonizing inner conflicts resolved the dilemma, relieved the tension and restored the tranquillity of his mind. These experiences occurred before his many fasts and before he undertook the launching of his movements of *Satyagraha*. They were sudden, decisive and irreversible.

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[106] *Harijan*, March 30, 1947. *Ibid.*, p. 219-20.

[107] *Harijan*, April 27, 1947, *Ibid.*, p. 232.

[108] *Harijan*, February 15, 1942., *Ibid.*

[109] *Ibid.*

[110] *Young India*, December 4, 1924.

[111] From *Yeravada Mandir's* Chapter X.

[112] *Ibid.*

Religion is not however, a matter of pure intellect or of blind faith. It is an innate tendency of the human mind. It indicates one's obligations to the self and to others. Its end is self-realization, which is the identification of the individual with all other individuals and an acceptance of the direction of the lower self by the higher self.

In his South African speeches and writings there is little reference to the dogmas and doctrines of any particular religion, nor did he lay much emphasis upon the tenets, customs, and institutions of he Hindu religion. In India, too, he constantly reiterated not only what he understood by religion and what was the substance and inner significance of religion, but also the identity and equality of all religions. However his transfer to the Indian environment drew his attention with tremendous force to the religious situation in the country. Here the relation between Hinduism and Islam confronted him and obliged him to consider ways and means of reconciling them. Therefore, he had to undertake a profound analysis of Hinduism and a socio-religious system claiming the homage of the large majority of the people of India and to find out what attitude the Hindus should adopt towards Islam and the other religions professed in India.

Involvement with the communal problem coloured his thought, words and deeds more concretely than they did in South Africa. The problem had not only a religious aspect in the ordinary significance of the word, but also a bearing on the political movement for freedom. In fact the religious and political questions were inextricably mixed together.

The views of Gandhiji on religion are, therefore, of the utmost importance as they governed all his political activity.

Gandhiji was fond of describing himself as a *Sanatani* Hindu. This is true in the light of his peculiar interpretation of the term. Nor it is possible to question its accuracy, for Hinduism is a protean phenomenon. It is an ancient religion which has gathered about it much matter during the course of history. It does not owe its promulgation to any particular individual as is the case with Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. Hinduism has no single book like the *Gatha,* the *Bible* or the *Quran* which may be regarded as the only source of doctrine, belief and worship. There are differences of opinion regarding the works which ought to be considered divine and authoritative. Again their interpretations—for instance, of the *Rigveda,* the most highly respected text, are many. The result is that no individual or sect among the Hindus can claim orthodoxy for itself. Hinduism has no established institution or church which has the authority to lay down the law or determine the doctrine. It is an expanding religion. Its ideas and practices have been changing through the ages. Its indefiniteness has been both its strength and weakness. The first is demonstrated by its continuity and resurgence during a span of over three millennia. The second accounts for defections and sectarian secessions from the main body.

Gandhiji accepted the *Vedas,* the *Upanishads,* the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Puranas* as divinely revealed texts; with conditions—for instance, first that the *Veda* ought not to be considered as exclusively divine or the four *Vedas* as the whole content of divine knowledge, but all other sacred books should be regarded as equally divine; secondly, that every word and every verse ought not to be accepted as divinely inspired, but only the essential teaching; and thirdly, that no one is bound to any interpretation, however learned. He held, "A *Veda* text must be rejected if it is repugnant to reason and contrary to experience."[113]

This is far from the orthodox authoritarian approach. It is the point of view of a modern critical mind which makes the reason of the individual the final arbiter in matters of religion.

To all dogmas of the Hindus, as well as of the other religions he applied these standards. For instance, he examined his faith in God and came to the conclusion that the only satisfying formula is "Truth is God". The idea of a personal God may be denied by an atheist, but it is impossible for any one to prove that Truth is not the absolutely supreme reality. All the attributes of God may be derived from this formula. For instance, that he is the transcendant reality, universal law, creator, sustainer and destroyer, immutable yet immanent in all change, life, truth, light, love and supreme good. He is apprehended by intuition and reason, is both a mystery and an epiphany. From this belief he drew the conclusion that all universe is bound in one order and that mankind was a unity. Such a unity cannot be realized without establishing non-violent relations among men. Non-violence is therefore inherent in the doctrine of world-order and human equality. The practice of Truth and Non-violence requires the discipline of vows, mastery of senses (*brahmacharya*) and control of desire for material objects (*asteya and aparigraha*).

Gandhiji also argued in favour of idol worship, *Varnashrama* (four-fold order of society and four stages of life), cow protection, transmigration and *karma.* In these matters he did not appeal to religious authorities as much as to reason. It is a different matter whether his reasoning is valid or otherwise. His arguments were controversial in the view of the traditionalists. Gandhiji was not, however, wedded to the letter of the law, but to its spirit, as is shown by his action in putting an end to the agony of a dying calf.

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[113] Tendulkar. D.G, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 361.

He was an inveterate foe of the caste system and especially of its ugly excrescence, untouchability. He found no words too strong to condemn them. He went so far as to hold that unless the curse of untouchability was removed Hinduism would die. In his disapproval of the evil he said:

"If it was proved to me that it (untouchability) is an essential part of Hinduism I for one would declare myself an open rebel against Hinduism itself."[114] He also believed that it would be easy to unite the Hindus and the Muslims if caste and untouchability were eradicated.

He believed in the equality of all religions—*Sarva dharmasamanatva*. He said, "My own veneration for other faiths is the same as that for my own faith,"[115] and "because I am a *Sanatani* Hindu I claim to be a Christian, a Buddhist and a Muslim."[116] He advocated, "Looking at all religions with an equal eye, we would not only not hesitate, but would think it our duty to blend with our faith every acceptable feature of other faiths."[117]

It is obvious from Gandhiji's explanations that he had emptied the Sanatan Hindu Dharma of all its orthodoxy and traditional complications. It would not be, therefore, far from truth to regard him as a non-denominationalist eclectic for whom all religions were essentially identical. Unfortunately his language, especially his frequent reiteration of some peculiarly Hindu tenets, like reverence for the cow, faith in idol worship, *varnashrama,* and reincarnation, etc., created misunderstandings among non-Hindus.

It is true that politics ought not to be regarded as a mere matter of force divorced from considerations of ethics, although in actual practice it is largely so. But to cover politics with the atmosphere of a particular religion is to create psychological obstacles in the evolution of secularism and thereby to strengthen the forces of communalism.

Gandhiji's religion did not mean merely contemplation and meditation or attaining the vision of the ineffable. For him religion was action, dynamic pursuit of the ever widening perspective of truth. For him knowing was willing, believing was union in action (*karmayoga*)—unceasing, unhalting, life-long. The object of action was self-realization, search for perfection—perfection of self and perfection of all. This was identical with the end which Buddha had chosen for himself—not to achieve unity with the Eternal (*nirvana*) till all the creatures had reached it.

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[114] Fischer, Louis, *Gandhi*, p. 165.

[115] Report of the first Annual Meeting of the Federation of International Fellowship, Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati, January 1948, p. 17. (Hingorani, *op. cit.*, p. 241).

[116] *Harijan*, April 27, 1947. *Ibid.*, p. 237.

[117] Fischer, L., *op. cit.*, p. 361.

What was the path which led towards this goal ? Living the life of Truth and Non-violence, removing hindrances which obstructed the progress of self and others on the way to realise perfection. He named the process 'determined insistence on Truth—*Satyagraha*'. The prerequisite of the search is Non-violence, love for those who obstruct the search and persuading them by inviting suffering on one's self, readily surrendering freedom, property, life itself, for the sake of Truth. This was the method taught by Thoreau and Tolstoy, the method of non-cooperation with evil, civil resistance. If the resister banishes hatred, purifies his motives and steadies his mind, he will realize that the opposite party, though temporarily deluded by immediate interests and blinding passions, will endeavour to remove the mist of error and illusion which obscures the vision and misguides the mind. If, then, right ends are pursued by right means success is certain.

Gandhiji used this ancient method, advocated in the modern age by Thoreau and Tolstoy on a scale never attempted before in history. The application of civil resistance (*Satyagraha*) to win national independence was an unique experiment in world history.

Truth and Non-violence were the two pillars on which the grand design of Gandhiji's religion was erected; for him it was obvious that Truth could not be considered a monopoly of the followers of any particular religion. Truth is universal and Gandhiji's life-aim was to see the universal embodied in all religions to emphasize their unity. In 1920 in an article in *Young India* he stated:

> "Let me explain what I mean by religion. It is not the Hindu religion which I certainly prize above all other religions. But it is the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the Truth within and which ever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker, and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself."[118]

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[118] *Young India*, May 12, 1920, 'Neither a saint nor a politician'.

Religion was not a matter of intellect alone for Gandhiji. It was not merely a philosophical system which satisfied reason. It was not any particular set of dogmas or ritual. It was a principle of action, expressed in actual life and exercised in the pursuit of daily duties. Gandhiji held, "Abstract Truth has no value, unless it incarnates in human beings who represent it by proving their readiness to die for it." Religion urges man towards the achievement of the full expression of self. It frees the individual from bondage of not-self.

Such a conception of religion is an utter negation of escapist ideas. It rejects the view that the world is an illusion, *maya,* that life is a burden and its struggles—failures and triumphs, meaningless. On the other hand, it induces the individual to strive for the full realization of his potentialities and to fulfil his duties by helping others to do the same. Thus by laying emphasis on Truth, he strengthened and enhanced the worth and importance of the individual, and demonstrated with absolute clarity the supremacy of the spirit. He taught that spiritual force was immeasurably greater than any material force —vast armies, deadly weapons, untold wealth or the most sophisticated industry.

Taking his stand on such a philosophy of life and maintaining that religion was the governing principle in Man's science he inevitably came to the conclusion that politics divorced from religious and spiritual values was absolutely meaningless, "a corpse fit only to be burnt"

In the tract *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule* he elaborated his ideas on politics guided by religion. The tract was written in 1909 when the teachings of Ruskin, Tolstoy and Thoreau were fresh in his mind. The reading of Ruskin's *Unto This Last* in 1904 had a marvellous effect on him. He wrote, "Of the books the one that brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation in my life was *Unto This Last.*" Immediately it led to the formation of the Phoenix Settlement to work on the lines suggested in the book.

Tolstoy's influence was much deeper and more pervasive. He regarded Tolstoy as one of his teachers. His *Kingdom of God is Within You,* overwhelmed him. He confessed, it had left an abiding impression on him.

Gandhiji had become acquainted somewhat indirectly with Thoreau's Ideas through the vegetarian societies in England. But in 1907, he came to know Thoreau directly from his books—*Walden* and *Civil Disobedience.* Following Thoreau he gave the name Civil Disobedience to his campaign in South Africa and embodied the idea in the *Hind Swaraj,* "If a man will only realize that it is unmanly to obey laws that are unjust, no man's tyranny will enslave him. This is the key to self-rule or home-rule".[119]

Hind Swaraj deals with three questions. In the first place it explains how India was conquered by the British. The answer is that India was not conquered by the sword, but India chose to deliver herself into the hands of the foreigners. The second question is how can India regain her independence? The answer is that no power on earth can continue to rule against the will of the people. It is because the semi-westernized Indians and wealthy men and professionals—amongst them lawyers, doctors, educators, government servants, businessmen and landlords, support British rule that India remains dependent. If they withdraw their cooperation the British would cease to govern. The third problem was for Gandhiji of the utmost importance, namely, what would be the shape of Indian society and civilization after achieving independence? He held that India would not be really free unless it completely rejected the western civilization and revived its own ancient system of society, economy and polity.

This precipitate and unqualified attack on the west proceeded from a mind whose inner search had recently culminated in a conviction ending doubts and engendering certainty. Although later thinking softened the severity of the indictment, its essential teaching was not modified. In a message to the Hind Swaraj number of the *Aryan Path* (1938), he declared: "I might change the language here and there, if I had to rewrite the booklet. But after the stormy thirty years through which I have since passed, I have seen nothing to make me alter the views expressed in it."[120]

The tract may be, therefore, treated as the authoritative and mature expression of Gandhiji's opinions, at least on some fundamental questions. The most controversial of them was his condemnation of modern civilization.

According to him modern civilization is essentially outward looking. It is not concerned with the spirit but with what is external in the universe and in man. In its intellectual pursuit it attempts mastery over the forces of nature and to understand the causes and effects of change in the world of matter. Overwhelmed by its involvement in the external universe, nature, the object of this civilization is to augment the satisfaction of physical needs and enhance physical well-being. Success in achieving these aims is the supreme end of life. It is indifferent to religion and morality.

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[119] Gandhi, M.K., *Hind Swaraj*, p. 6.

[120] Gandhi, M.K., "Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule", *The Aryan Path*, Special Hind Swaraj Number, September 1938.

Its machine-based industry panders to man's pleasures. The industrial development has led to concentration of population in urban areas and ushered in numerous evils of city life. One of them is increase in disease and, therefore, the unhealthy growth of doctors and medicine. Another is the stimulation of artificialities and complexities of social relations necessitating the proliferation of lawyers and courts. A third is the creation of the conflict between capital and labour—the grinding boredom and dehumanizing tendency of work in factories. Its railways have robbed the country of its contentment and aided in the spread of disease. They have destroyed the happiness and naturalness of village life. It, has, therefore, sought to train the younger generation through an education devoid of moral purpose. It is responsible for promoting competition and rivalry between individual and individual, class and class, and nation and nation. The inevitable consequence has been the increase of violence, armaments and war.

This nightmarish civilization was corrupting and demoralizing India. It had injected all the diseases of modernism in the country—industrialism, urbanism, capitalism, poverty, railway transport, lawyers, courts, doctors, greed for money, sycophancy and communal conflict, drink and immorality; above all an educational system which emasculates the mind, suppresses the spirit of independence and self-reliance and erodes faith in the great ethical values cherished by the past generations.

In order to recover its soul, Gandhiji warned India that it was necessary to reject the modern civilization totally—its techniques, machinery, materialist-oriented education, irreligious culture, its parliamentary form of government which he likened to a whore. Instead of multiplying wealth, seeking pleasure, forming atomistic and competitive social organization, he dreamt of establishing an ideal civilization by the revival of the ancient Indian village life—self-sufficient, self-governed, unhustling and peaceful. Here everyone would follow the occupation preordained by heredity and all would be equal, none regarded high or low, Brahmin or Bhangi (sweeper). Such village republics would give to the individual the opportunity to develop to his full stature, to realize the self in cooperation with his fellow-beings. At the same time these autonomous units would freely enter into federal organizations entrusted with limited and necessary economic functions in the general interest. In this polity the individual will exercise the fullest freedom but government will be reduced to a minimum and will exercise no coercive authority.

The reconstruction aimed at substituting the gospel of love in place of hate, self-sacrifice for violence and soul force instead of brute forces. The civilization will banish self-indulgence and godlessness and usher in the golden age of faith and righteousness.

Although the ideal of Gandhiji was a stateless society, established through purely non-violent methods, in which the individuals were permeated in thought, word and deed by the spirit of Truth and Non-violence; in which there was no exploitation, no inequality and no property; in which the individual and society considered their talents and possessions as trusts for the use of the common weal; in which life was simple, decentralized and the environment natural and rural; in which industry was at a minimum and manual crafts were practised by each and every individual for winning his bread; in which there was no army to defend by force, but only the police to assist and serve; in which there were no railways, no machinery except to relieve the genuine hardships and in any case machine would be the slave of man and not his master; in which there were no doctors and no lawyers and no judges but Panchayats to deal out justice; and in which there were no corporal punishments, and no political organ wielding authority sanctioned by force.

The bitter experience of the non-cooperation movements and of human frailties obliged him to make concessions to realities and modify the ideal to bring it into consonance with the character of men who lacked virtues required of a *Satyagrahi*. But the process of adjustment went really against his grain; there is, therefore, hesitation and the backward and forward movement of thought between what is ideal and what is practical.

For example, his opinions about machinery underwent considerable modification. Not only did he approve of the use of small machines like the Singer Sewing machine, but also of big factories to produce the little devices like Singer; only they would have to be under public control. There was no objection if machinery provided aid to the body and did not affect the spirit.

Similarly, although in 1909 he had denounced the parliamentary system as a nine days' wonder, in 1917, he supported the demand for this form of government, and in 1920 declared, "My *Swaraj* is the Parliamentary government of India in the modern sense of the term for the time being."[121]

But perhaps his most surprising concession to practical considerations was on Ahimsa and civil resistance. He recognized that life lived upon life or *himsa*, and concluded that killing was not *himsa* (violence) when life was destroyed for the sake of those whose life was taken. The examples were: (1) the destruction of the bodies of tortured creatures, including human beings, helplessly suffering the pangs of slow and certain death, and (2) the putting an end to the life of a girl threatened with violence which could not be avoided.

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[121] *Young India*, 1919-1922, September, 22, 1920, quotes the interview of andhiji with the representative of the London *Times*, appearing in *Young India*, ecember, 29, 1920.

In Non-violence he discerned three degrees; (1) enlightened and pure; (2) expedient, adopted because of practical considerations as a policy and not as a principle; and (3) the passive—of the coward. In his last years he had begun to feel that a large number of his followers did not practise Non-violence out of conviction, but either as an expedient or a substitute for violence which appeared impractical. He admitted that because of the unpreparedness of the people for Non-violence, he was placing only a part of its programme before them.

The object of this plan was the establishment of democracy in India. He favoured democracy on two grounds. In the first place, the democratic mind was not absolutist, it functioned according to his philosophy of *Syadvada*—may be and may not be; secondly, democratic decisions were based on the principle of counting and not breaking of heads, in other words, the democratic process was essentially non-violent; for in his democracy there was no room for suppressing by force the religion, culture or worship of a minority. He held, "In matters of conscience the Law of Majority has no place."[122]

The principle of non-intervention was extended to the individual as well. He pleaded for "leaving every individual to follow that form of religion which appeared best to him, without any interference from the state."[123] This meant that "the state should be undoubtedly secular."[124]

It is interesting to clarify the features of the half-way house society which stood between the ideal non-violent stateless society and the existing states in the world which are based on force and fraud. The object of this plan was to train people to realize the ideal. It was, therefore, necessary that the moving force of the society should be ethical and the parts of the state so constituted as to help this process. But he made it plain, "I do not ask India to follow out today the methods prescribed in my book (*Hind Swaraj*)."[125]

The basic considerations were—(1) the greatest good of all, (2) the participation of the largest number in government, (3) the minimum of government interference, and (4) the recognition of the worth and importance of the individual. From these considerations it inevitably followed that the objective of the plan was the establishment of the democratic system of government. He affirmed, "*Swaraj* will be a Parliament chosen by the people with the fullest power over the finance, the police, the military, the navy, the courts and the educational institutions."[126]

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[122] *Young India*, 1919-1922, August 4, 1920, p. 860.

[123] *Harijan*, November, 23, 1947.

[124] *Harijan*, August 24, 1947.

[125] *Young India*, 1919-1922, December 8, 1920, p. 885.

The Parliament would consist of a single chamber legislature which would be composed of a small number of representatives of the people chosen by indirect election. The representatives would be those who had acquired personal *swaraj* (self-rule), and were selfless, able and incorruptible. They would be elected by voters who qualified by manual labour registered.

The units of the state would be the village Panchayats entrusted with large powers. The traditional state will have the minimum of functions—defence, peace and order, supervision of large factories and power.

Justice would be dispensed by Panchayats and *ad hoc* arbitrators. There would be a few courts and not a whole hierarchy. Justice would be expeditious and cheap and the fees of the lawyers low.

The society would be egalitarian, the caste-system as a whole and the untouchable class especially, would be abolished. Individuals would be classified according to the hereditarily determined occupational tendencies (*varna dharma*). But whatever one's occupational class the status of all would be equal, though there might be some difference in the earnings. Every one had to work for his bread, but those so inclined might undertake additional physical and intellectual work.

In such a society wealth would be distributed equitably though not equally, but no large disparities would be permitted. Holders of property in industry, land and other professions would regard their wealth as a trust. The owners of factories would consider the workers as co-proprietors, in government-maintained factories the labourers would be represented on management. The zamindars would share the same rights and privileges as the peasants; in case they refused to do so, their lands would be confiscated.

Large-scale industry and heavy transport would continue, but under state control. But primary production, for instance, food and clothing would remain with the farmers and artisans.

The state would take over forests, rivers, power and communications.

The profit motive would be eliminated and competition uprooted. Immoral activities like gambling, drinking and prostitution would be disfavoured and restrained.

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[126] *Ibid*

Education would be completely overhauled. The national languages would be used as media of instruction and Hindi would be taught as the *lingua franca* of India. Education would be craft-oriented, and book-learning would be subordinated to character building and acquisition of skills. Religion would not be taught in schools, on the ground that "the state interference would probably always be unwelcome."[127]

Gandhiji's proposals regarding the immediate constitution of the Indian society-state are scattered about in his writings. He never obtained the leisure to give them a systematic form. But although he departed from some of the details of his ideal plan he did not make any compromise with his conviction that society was an ethical organism which provided to the individual the opportunity to realize his moral capabilities. The state, however, was not considered by him as a spiritual entity. He did not attribute to it a moral personality and therefore he regarded it as a concession to human weakness, to be discarded as soon as the members of society attained the virtues of Truth and Non-violence.

It is a tragedy of human history that the teachings of the noblest and the most high-minded religious leaders of the world have been denied by their followers, although while deviating from their master's instructions they have continued to affirm their faith in the religion and its promulgator. Such has been the fate of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. Such has been the fate of eight-fold path of righteous conduct which aimed at the attainment of perfection or *Nirvana;* Jesus Christ proclaimed the gospel of universal love, non-resistance and peace, and Muhammad laid stress on divine unity, human equality, right action, peace and submission to divine will. How have the adherents of these world religions acquitted themselves in action through history? It is not necessary to dilate upon the deplorable events which throughout the ages have stained their annals. They are filled with accounts of bloodshed, rapine, destruction, cruelty and violence. Nor has the record of Hinduism been any better.

Knowledge of such quirks of history have forced many thoughtful people to reflect upon Gandhiji's mission, and to speculate about the success or failure of his experiments. Tagore thought: "Perhaps he will not succeed. Perhaps he will fail as the Buddha failed and Christ failed to wean men from their iniquities, but he will always be remembered as one who made his life a lesson for all ages to come."[128]

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[127] *Harijan,* March 16,1947, quoted in Bose, N.K., Studies, p. 267.

[128] *Visvabharati Quarterly.* Gandhi Memorial Peace Number, 1938. Rabindranath Tagore's article, p. 13.

Gandhiji was an introvert, continuously engaged in introspection and self-criticism. He believed Truth was dynamic, ever expanding, and regarded it his duty to constantly examine his actions and his shortcomings. But although this perpetual examination only ended with his life, there appears a gradual change from unbounded self-confidence towards doubt regarding his own competence, doubt whether he had achieved the degree of self-realization requisite for success in his objectives. He did not waver in his belief in the efficacy of Truth and Non-violence, but the growing violence in the country and the rapidly deteriorating relations between the Hindus and Muslims shook his belief in his spiritual power to sway the minds of men.

When he returned from South Africa in 1915, he was glowing with the flush of success. He had inspired the poor, illiterate, depressed workers indentured or free to demonstrate under his magic leadership a quality of courage, endurance and resistance which amazed the South African whites. It was natural that he should believe in the possibility of a similar miracle in India. He was confident; he sincerely thought he could lead India to freedom by non-violent methods. He had almost literally reduced himself to zero and thus acquired the persona of the national whole, the moral capacity and strength of all. In consequence, if anything went wrong or any individual or group fell from his standard of behaviour he regarded it as his personal failure and sought to make amends by fasting and imposing upon himself more and more self-denying rules of conduct. Still in his last years depression and disappointment besieged his mind, although he fought manfully against them.

In the early years, however, the aberrations and misdeeds of his followers did not cause frustration. He denounced them, undertook vicarious penances, but he did not despair of the future and never gave up hope.

For instance, in 1919 when *Satyagraha* was launched against the Rowlatt bills, people in Bombay, Ahmedabad and other places indulged in *hartal* and destructive acts, he not only denounced the violence and undertook a fast of seventy-two hours, but publicly acknowledged that the campaign was 'a Himalayan miscalculation'. In 1921, when disturbances broke out in Bombay on the arrival of the Prince of Wales, he was filled with remorse. Addressing the delegates to the Ahmedabad Congress, he said, "I am but a seeker after Truth. ...I claim to be making a ceaseless effort to find it. But I admit that I have not yet found it. To find Truth completely is to realize one's self and one's destiny, that is, to become perfect."[129]

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[129] Tendulkar, D.G., *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 98.

He exclaimed again and again, "I am far from perfect, I know the way to it. But knowing the way is not reaching the end."[130] In 1924 after a series of ugly Hindu-Muslim riots which only temporarily ceased after his historic fast in Delhi lasting from 18 September to 8 October 1924, he sorrowfully avowed, "I have admitted my incompetence."[131] In a letter to Bart de Light he confessed, "I know I fail often, sometimes consciously, more often unconsciously. —I am painfully aware of my failures. But the light within me is steady and clear."[132]

Such statements could be multiplied almost endlessly. Nevertheless, Gandhiji's resilience rose above every setback and even failure, for example at the Round Table Conference in 1931.

But after 1939 dark clouds began to cast their shadow on the serene radiance of his spirit. The Second World War into which India was dragged in disregard of her wishes, the communal bitterness, and the general sense of helplessness forced the Congress to resolve upon measures to vindicate the country's dignity and remove the feeling of frustration. In 1942, the All-India Congress Committee under the guidance of Gandhiji called upon the British Government to quit India. Immediately before any step had been taken to implement the decision Gandhiji and other Congress leaders were placed behind the bars.

On his release in May 1944, he found the country plunged into repression, frustration, hatred and anger. But what was worse, the fire of communal passions was threatening to engulf the whole land.

The volcano of religious hatred erupted in August 1946. Gandhiji rushed to Bengal, from Bengal to Bihar and then to Delhi. Everywhere he went he performed miracles in extinguishing the fires and restoring peace. But the herculean efforts almost broke him. The world of freedom, harmony and love which he had sought to build up in thirty long and strenuous years seemed to end in smoke. He maintained his outward calm and intensified the rigours of self-discipline and self-denial, nevertheless his heart was rent by uncertaintly and anguish. To Amiya Chakravarty he wrote from Srirampur (Noakhali): "I am groping for light.... I find that I have not the patience and the technique needed in these circumstances—suffering and evil often overwhelm me and I stew in my own juice."[133]

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[130] *Ibid.*, p. 170.

[131] *Ibid.*, p. 240.

[132] *Visva Bharati Quarterly*, Gandhi Memorial Peace Number, 1938, Ethel Mannin's article, p. 102.

To Pyarelal he confided, "I see I have not the knack. I have not yet found the key to *Ahimsa*."[134]

Even in this gloom his faith in the efficacy of his ideals remained unimpaired. He wrote to Patel, "Truth and *Ahimsa* are perfect. They can never fail. But I, their exponent, may."[135]

On January 3, 1947, he again repeated, "I can see there is some grave defect in me somewhere which is the cause of all this." He asked, "When will God take me out of all this darkness into His light?"[136]

The mood of doubt and despondency continued throughout 1947. In May, he told Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy (who later became the Chief Minister of West Bengal), "When there is a raging fire all round, I have no desire to prolong my life by taking rest."[137] In May he exclaimed in utter disappointment, "My life's work seems to be over."[138] In June he regretted, "In placing civil disobedience before constructive work I was wrong.........I feared that I should estrange my co-workers and so carried on with imperfect *Ahimsa*."[139]

In July in a letter to Asaf Ali (later India's Ambassador to the United States), he wrote, "I have come to the conclusion that our way was non-violent only superficially, our hearts were violent."
The perennial problem of man, the perpetual travail of the human spirit, which he sought to solve was expressed in these words:

"The spirit in me pulls one way, the flesh in me pulls in the opposite direction. There is freedom from the action of these two forces but that freedom is attainable only by slow and painful stages.........The struggle revolves itself into an incessant crucifixion of the flesh so that the spirit may become entirely free".[141]

The inner conflict reached a stage when his heart cried out, "I invoke the aid of the all-embracing Power to take me away from the 'vale of tears' rather than make me 'helpless witness of the butchery by man become savage......Yet I cry, not my will but Thine alone shall prevail."[142]

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[133] Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. I, p. 430.
[134] *Ibid.*, p. 431
[135] *Ibid.*, p. 466.
[136] *Ibid.*, p. 470.
[137] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 191.
[138] *Ibid.*, p. 210.
[139] *Ibid.*, p. 314.
[140] *Ibid.*, p. 322.
[141] *Ibid.*, p. 324.

The happenings after the transfer of power disillusioned him and he asked, "If India has no further use for *Ahimsa,* can she have any use for me?"[143] His agony was so acute as to make him feel, "I am mounted on my funeral pyre". His aching heart sounded the funeral note, "You should know it is a corpse that is telling you this".[144]

Thus passed the month of December. One month later the bullet of a wicked lunatic put an end to the life of the man who was the incarnation of compassion and love. He died with forgiveness for the murderer in his heart and the name of Rama on his lips.

The growing doubts of the last years of Gandhiji's life and his violent death at the end raise appalling questions regarding the rationality of history and the destiny of man. Although easy to put they are almost impossible to answer. Why, for instance, must some of the greatest benefactors of mankind fall victim to hatred and violence? Socrates, Jesus, Gandhi were the high priests of truth, goodness, virtue, sacrifice and service, yet they had to pay the price of their moral exaltation with their very lives. Is common man then so intolerant of uncommon virtue that he must seek to annihilate it together with its bearer? Does history really uphold the claim of the immediate, the transitory and the repetitive against that of the rational, the abiding and the constant? If so, what is the end of human striving? Towards what goal is mankind being driven?

It has been suggested that the absolutes in truth and virtue exist only for the prophet. Ordinary men—statesmen, politicians, administrators, cannot afford to function on this plain, they must compromise with principles and adjust their actions to the capacity and character of ordinary men. They cannot look far into the future, their sights must be low, their objectives not distant. Iife, according to them, is a mixed fare; its preferences are not always determined by what is positively good, but as often by what is the lesser evil. On the contrary Gandhiji always chose absolutely true ends and non-violent means. He disregarded human weaknesses. He did not realize that only rare individuals can remain dedicated throughout life to high ideals, and although the multitude may be momentarily impelled into a mood of exaltation, it cannot maintain it for a long time. His neglect of realities was responsible for his frustration.

Many people regard him as an impossible idealist, whose successes are counterbalanced by his many failures. They point out that his victory in South Africa was only temporary. The Whites were not converted and did not abandon their racialism, as they should have done if the claim of *Satyagraha* was true. The *Satyagraha* of 1919 for the repeal of the Rowlatt Act was pronounced 'a Himalayan miscalculation', that of 1920 ended in the tragedy of Chauri Chaura and failed to rectify the Panjab wrongs or to satisfy the Khilafatists' demands. The Salt *Satyagraha* which was undertaken to establish *Poorna Swaraj* (complete independence) led instead to the Gandhi-Irwin Pact which lured Gandhiji to futile cooperation with an impossible Round Table Conference.

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[142] *Ibid.*, p. 461.

[143] *Ibid.*, p. 686.

[144] *Ibid.*, p. 685.

The Civil Disobedience movement—which lasted from 1930 to 1934 with a short break in 1931, the Satyagraha offered by individuals in 1940-41 and the Quit India resolution of 1942 which did not ensue in a campaign, had little impact.

But it would be wrong to draw the conclusion from these facts that the *Satyagrahas* were sterile efforts. India's freedom fight had a two-fold aspect. From the external point of view it was a struggle to end the domination and rule of a foreign power. But essentially it was a moral struggle. As pointed out repeatedly by Gandhiji, *Swaraj* meant the breaking of the chains which bound the minds of men. These chains consisted of fear, selfishness, distrust, cowardice and vices of various kinds. Gandhiji's teaching, and more than his teaching, his example revolutionized Indian character. Cowardice and fear gave place to bravery and courage, the spirit of sacrifice and endurance of suffering for a cause began to prevail over selfishness, a new sense of self-reliance and self-respect emerged and India felt the glow of confidence in her destiny. With every fast and every campaign a thrill of suspense and hope passed through the length and breadth of the land and made the Indian hearts beat in unison. His words and deeds created an atmosphere of sanctity which uplifted and purified man. Again Gandhiji identified himself with the millions, he shared their joys and sorrows and he cast his life in their mould. For the first time it dawned upon the consciousness of India that the masses living in the hundreds of thousands of villages constituted the real India. The princes, the rich, the educated held their influence, wealth and learning as a trust on behalf of the toilers in fields, factories and shops. Their welfare was the supreme end, their freedom the real swaraj.

The masses were poor, ignorant and miserable, but enfolded within them was a class whose existence was the most shameful blot on society. They were the depressed—the disinherited and the despised. Gandhiji's great service to the country was to rouse the conscience of the people to abolish this iniquitous system, to eradicate this ancient sin.

It is vain to try and find parallels in history, nor is it profitable to institute comparisons. Greatness is beyond weight and measure, for each great man is his own standard. None of the great may be judged by immediate achievement. Their light beckons from afar and illumines the path of men through the vast expanse of time.

Gandhiji ranks among the shining ones who have led humanity slowly, perhaps falteringly and wearily towards the Pisgah heights where spreads out before the eye the many splendoured vista of human unity, world peace and universal happiness.

CHAPTER FIVE

MUSLIM THOUGHT AND POLITICS

I. INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the century the Muslim world was approaching a crisis in its political and cultural life. Tendencies of thought and politics growing during the nineteenth century were leading towards the denouement of new ideals of individual and collective behaviour. The nineteenth century had witnessed the debacle of one Muslim state after another and its passing under western domination. From the Atlantic to the Pacific the same process was in operation.

In the nineteenth century Africa, which included the northern Muslim belt from the Red Sea to the Atlantic, was partitioned among the European powers. By 1905, when Germany staked its claim to a part of the African spoils by dispatching Kaiser Wilhelm II to Tangier, Africa to the north of the Sahara—with the exception of Egypt, had fallen under the French sphere of influence. 'Egypt had been occupied by the British in 1882 and Egypt and Sudan had become British protectorates.

The Ottoman Empire—'the sick Man of Europe', was moving towards dissolution. Its Christian principalities had become independent and the Balkan wars of 1911-12 completed the virtual withdrawal of the Ottoman Turks from Europe. Even their Asian home was in danger of disruption after the First World War, but was saved from this dire fate by the heroic exertions of Mustafa Kamal.

In West Asia, the Arab peoples of the Fertile Crescent long groaning under the ineffective and oppressive Ottoman rule which ended after the War, became a prey to western imperialism. Iran under the rule of the feckless Qajars was ripe for a revolution which started in 1907. Meanwhile the British had established control over the Persian Gulf and its coast and the Russians dominated the north. Persian poets bewailed the rape of their fair land by the two European powers. The Muslim Khanates of Central Asia were being ground down by the Tsaris steam-roller. Afghanistan was forced into the British sphere of influence after the Panjdeh incident of 1885.

The Muslim countries in South East Asia were also in the grip of European powers—Britain, France and Holland. In short, at the beginning of the twentieth century the sun of freedom was sinking on the horizon and perpetual darkness seemed to be descending on the territories inhabited by the Muslims.

India with its large Musalman minority had little prospect of self-government, either early or late. The British empire was at the zenith of its power and prosperity and did not show any signs of relaxing its control over the millions of India. Yet the encircling gloom was shot with rays—dim, and feeble yet, of light and hope. The Indian National Congress, in spite of the Government's arrogant distrust and contemptuous disdain and in spite of the opposition of self-seeking puppets and misguided admirers of British rule, was steadily and without noise or commotion pursuing the objective of responsible government for India.

The problem before the leaders of the movement was to effect a radical, indeed a revolutionary change, in the attitude of the people, a change in the basic loyalties—from caste and community to the nation. The economic, cultural and political forces—irrespective of the wishes of the governing race, were preparing the ground, but conscious and deliberate effort was, nevertheless, necessary for the propagation of the new social ideals and to transform the medieval outlook of the people.

In order to awaken the consciousness of nationality, so that the horizons of allegiance may be broadened and to establish nationalism as the primary motive force for collective action, many factors must combine—both unconscious and conscious. Love of the native land or patriotism is not a universal nor a natural or inborn sentiment although it has its basis in certain instincts, innate tendencies like the *amour loci.* The seed of nationalism germinates under certain social conditions blossoms into an all-consuming passion when the climate is favourable, but it assumes different hues and shapes on account of a variety of historical causes.

Pre-British India, like medieval Europe, was devoid of this sentiment. The principles of collective organisation in the medieval and ancient times were race, blood-relationship, community and culture. In ancient India *Janapadas* were tribal groups; in the middle ages the Rajputs, Jats, Marathas and other racial communities among the Hindus, and the Mughals, Pathans, Iranis, Turanis, Arabs, etc. among the Muslims tended to cohere, but they possessed only a languid sense of identification with the religious fraternity as a whole. The Hindu communities, the linguistic and territorial groups, although sharing a common culture and religion, behaved in practice as quite separate political units. And the same was true of the Muslims. Only in theory did Hindu and Muslim scholars regard their communities as unities. But for practical purposes, loyalties were based on blood-relationship—actual or traditional or imagined, and not on neighbourliness or territorial propinquity. This type of society began to give way under the stress of economic, political and cultural forces under British rule. But as has been pointed out in the previous volume although the economy of India did change, it did not undergo an extensive enough or deep enough change to bring about a social revolution in the various layers of the social order. The villages providing work for about eighty per cent of the people of India altered only superficially and the changes they underwent failed to substitute a dynamic for a static life. Only the cities where not more than twelve per cent of Indians lived came under the new influences. Even in the cities the population was to a considerable extent engaged in occupations other than industrial.

The national consciousness, therefore, first arose in the towns and cities and thence spread out slowly into the country. But it encountered obstacles and opposition—principally from traditionalism, because change of habits and prejudices rooted in the minds for ages always encounters resistance. When, however, the pace of social and economic change is tardy and conservatism is supported tacitly or openly, by the influence of government, an alien government, the progress is bound to be retarded and uneven. It may even be devious.

By the beginning of the twentieth century the Indian society had evolved largely the new urban middle class which though small was influential. It had acquired, in contrast with the non-political masses steeped in the traditions of the middle ages, a consciousness of its political privileges and responsibilities. The intelligentsia of India like that of other countries aspired for a political status for India similar to that of the other independent countries. Although in the early years the immediate goal before them was vague and the ultimate ideal obsure, the leaders legitimately looked for opportunities to realize their innate capability to direct and control and to determine the objectives and courses of political and administrative action.

India like other countries had its dominating personalities whose instinctive tendency for self-assertion required a field for expression. This natural instinct for leadership was obstructed, and so constructive capability was bound to take the path of destruction of the opposing force. The British rulers were loth to admit the legitimacy or validity of the claims and ambitions of the Indian elite and continued to thwart them as long as possible, till at last circumstances compelled them to yield.

Since 1885, organised opposition was being offered by the Indian National Congress. It was not very effective for it had to contend against not only the powers of an alien government, the influence of the aristocratic and landowning classes, but also the hesitations and doubts of some sections of the Indian middle class itself, including a considerable part of the Muslim educated class.

It is not difficult to account for the opposition of the princely order, he landed proprietors and the wealthy. The first two owned their privileges and position to the dispensation of the British rulers. The rich are normally upholders of the status quo and naturally averse to revolutionary change. Some of them, however, usually betray their own class, and join the ranks of the rebels.

During the nineteenth century the Indian middle class did not repudiate foreign rule. On the other hand it looked upon it in spite of its defects, as divine dispensation. Its beneficient and oppressive facets were for the improvement and correction of the people.

So far as the Muslims were concerned they, like the Hindus, were divided into three classes—the upper, the middle, and the large uneducated toiling mass at the bottom. Among the religious communities of India they formed by far the largest minority. The population of India religionwise in 1901 was :

Hindus	65.5 per cent
Muslims	24.3 "
Others	10.2 "

In 1941 or on the eve of independence the proportions were only slightly altered.

The Indian people as a whole were subject to the same influences and were undergoing similar development in all the sections. But India is a vast country and in spite of the spread of railways, roads and means of communication, in spite of administrative uniformity and economic interdependence of its regions, it was divided by race, language, religion—belief and worship, customs and personal laws. This diversity was countered by two important factors.

In the first place, there was an unbroken continuity of history and tradition with the consequence that religious attitudes, ideals of life, art, literature, music and ways of living tended to be common. Both Hindus and Muslims believed theoretically in the supremacy of religion in individual and collective life, both were mystically minded, were attracted by ascetic and other-worldly ideals, both in their daily life followed similar ways and customs. In languge, dress, food and drink, house-hold appointments, marriage, funeral and other ceremonies, business and so forth, both had much in common. Both lived, mingled together in villages and towns. They attended the same modern schools and studied in them the same curricula.

The Hindu and Muslim masses, who constituted the vast majority of the two communities differed but little. Both observed their customary laws which were different from the sacred laws. Both shared a common life in the villages and constituted essential and interdependent parts of the village economy. Both contributed by their labour towards the maintenance and welfare of the village community.

The differences between the two communities were more marked in towns and among the higher classes. For the traditionally educated Muslims the languages of religion and learning were Arabic and Persian, and for the Hindus Sanskrit. But both used the same Indian languages in ordinary life—educated as well as the uneducated. A number of Muslims studied Sanskrit and composed poetry in the modern Indian languages like Hindi, Panjabi, Bengali, etc., and similarly a considerable number among the Hindus acquired proficiency in Persian and used Urdu as the language of literary expression.

The second cementing factor was the propagation of modernism and all that it connotes—nationalism, rational thought—science, techniques of industry, trade and administration. However, besides the factors which promoted the consciousness of nationality, there were others which had a contrary effect.

The identities and differences between the Hindus and the Muslims had existed for hundreds of years but in the pre-British times there was no political significance attached to them. It was quite common for Muslim officers and their soldier retainers employed by a Hindu prince to fight under him against his Muslim enemies. Equally the Hindus reciprocated the practice. There were numerous examples of war and battle from 711 to 1858, in which the fighting force was mixed. Politics was the concern of just a limited number of families or a small section of a community. Vast numbers among the people in both communities were essentially non-political, having no part or lot in the making or unmaking of governments or influencing their policies. One of the prominent effects of British rule was to awaken among the middle class intelligentsia interest in the affairs of government, to politicize them. The political interest grew in intensity with times and spread in wide circles.

The essential feature which distinguishes political action from all other types—economic, social, religious, is the application and use of force. Politics is basically a function of power. It is the vital relationship of obedience and command resting on physical sanctions. When a group becomes conscious of its individuality it naturally wants to exercise this relationship within itself and resents its operation by aliens. The growth of this consciousness is a process from potentiality to actuality. It may, however, be atrophied or disrupted, depending upon the inner and outer environment of the group.

Nation-building in every country involves discovering and nurturing the germs of unity among its diverse elements. In countries which enjoy the blessings of freedom, the government is, in the ordinary course of affairs, a powerful instrument for fostering this unity. For although nations have usually created states, it has also happened that states have created nations. For example, the United Kingdom, the United

States of America, Canada, South Africa. Australia, Germany, and the USSR, are creatures of states.

The governments of the Asian and African countries are today engaged in this task of promoting the solidarity of their peoples, and developing into nations. But if unluckily a people are placed under foreign domination, then they are not only deprived of the aid of this powerful unifying agency, they are, on the contrary, obliged to contend against the fissiparous tendencies let loose by the alien government in the interests of its self-preservation. But paradoxically, foreign rule in spite of itself lets loose forces which conspire towards the unification of the people.

It was the misfortune of India that it had not only to reconcile the internal differences—racial, cultural and creedal, which every nation in the making has to do, but had also to fight against the deliberately and undeliberately provoked differences and disputes among the Indian communities. The evolution of nationalism, therefore, was a struggle between the two opposite forces—centripetal and centrifugal. Inwardly this struggle was between the modern ways of living and thinking and the medieval habits and ideas; between the concepts of society bound together by political interests, even though comprising a multiplicity of racial, cultural and religious groups, and the concept of a congeries of tribes, communities, and principalities held together for a time by a dominant power and then relapsing into a multitude of autonomous groups.

The steps in the growth of national consciousness in the nineteenth century have been described in another chapter. It is necessary at this stage to discuss the fluctuations of the process in the twentieth century.

A broad review of the march of Indian thought and politics exhibits a medley of conflicts within the society. During the twentieth century the goal was self-government, although there was difference of opinion concerning its basis, structure and function. Both Hindus and Muslims accepted in the early stages of the struggle the ideal of Dominion Status and both in later stages demanded independence. Where they disagreed was on the constitutional arrangements for the safeguarding of their interests.

In view of the emphasis which was given to Hindu-Muslim differences in the last stages of the movement for freedom, it is interesting to note the closeness of the Hindu and Muslim thinking and similarity of objectives in their practical endeavours.

A striking illustration from the nineteenth century is the resemblance between the basic ideas of Ram Mohan Roy in the first half and of Syed Ahmad Khan in the second half of the century. Both held up the supremacy of reason in religious, moral and social affairs. Both endeavoured to demonstrate that their religion was justified by reason and based upon natural laws. Only in the one case the truth was revealed in the *Upanishads* and in the other in the *Quran*. Both agreed in their views about God, man and nature and their mutual relations. Both believed in the oneness of God, the reality of nature and the equality of man. They repudiated the ascetic view of life and the idea that the world was evil or illusory. Both desired the removal of social evils and irrational customs which had sapped the strength of society and defiled the purity of its morals. For both western education—the study of modern sciences, was the sovereign remedy for the ills of Indian society; for both the western system of responsible government was the ideal form of government which Indians ought to try to attain. Neither was convinced that India had reached the stage of social evolution where this form of government could be immediately established. They recognised the importance of communal harmony and the mixed character of India's culture.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century a new temper began to emerge. Reason's supremacy began to recede, feeling began to take its place in men's esteem. Faith assumed domination over intellect and criticism of religion was deprecated. Scriptures divinely inspired and revealed were not to be subjected to fallible human reason. The Rousseauist revolt for the enthronement of sentiment was repeated and romanticism strengthened. Its principal features appeared in Indian thought and literature—glorification of the sensuous, rhapsodizing over the beauties of nature and the charms of woman, adulation of the achievements of the past, emphasis upon the worth of the individual, and exaltation of the value of the self.

Poets in Indian languages and thinkers in different communities all in their own ways gave utterance to this *weltanschaung* of the Indian spirit. But superficial variations of verbal formulations and appeals to different religious contexts prevented them from recognising each other's face. When emotionalism runs its autonomous course and reason is denigrated inevitably distinctions become irreconcilable and diversities unbridgeable.

The differences were accentuated by the healthy reaction of the Indian mind against the patronising assumption of superiority by the West and its facile expectation that the only course open for the East was to blindly follow the progressive exemplars of the West. The assumption and the expectation were both humiliating, like the rubbing of salt into the wounds. The first reaction, as has been pointed out in the earlier volume, was one of humble acceptance of India's inferiority and an endeavour to imitate the foreigner and imbibe his virtue. This lasted almost throughout the 19th century, then the reaction assumed an altogether different complexion. A new self-image and a new sense of dignity arose. Hence pride in the greatness of Asia's past as the creator of world's great religions and civilizations, coupled with a somewhat exaggerated belief in the superiority of the spiritual heritage of India and an equally exaggerated depreciation of the so-called materialism of the West, combined to generate a feeling of self-respect with an almost morbid striving for originality.

The Hindu leaders of thought and society laid much stress upon the great moments of India's past and its wonderful philosophical, literary, artistic and cultural achievements. The Muslim thinkers and poets in their turn exalted the great virtues of Islam as a religion and the great qualities of Muhammad as the Prophet of a new religion, and the builder of a new nation charged with a divine mission. They recalled with pride the Muslim contributions to learning, science and culture. They found the justification of their faith in the rapid spread of Islamic religion and the amazing victories of its armies in the East and the West.

Such emphasis upon the past of the two communities created the impression that they were two different nationalities, inhabiting two widely separated worlds. Thus the great illusion was created which was fostered and swelled by the strains of practical needs.

The growth of differences between the Hindus and Muslims as the aspiration for independence became keener was an unfortunate development. The Hindus constituted the great majority—nearly three-fourths of the total population. The Muslims were not an insignificant minority as they were about one-fourth of the population. India was not unique in this matter. Almost every country in the world possesses majority and minority groups in various proportions. Most free countries have found a *modus vivendi* and developed political solidarity in spite of differences of creed, language and race.

There is no inevitability about the solution of the minorities problem. Wisdom and favourable circumstances are likely to ensure success, lack of them will lead to failure. What is needed is the will to affirm "We wish to be one single nation of brothers.[1]" It is the historian's task to analyse the factors involved and assess their working in the course of years in the special case under study in order to understand the end result.

In India of the nineteenth century several streams of thought, sociological and ideological, had begun to flow in the wake of the impact of the West. By the beginning of the twentieth century the Indian mind had been profoundly stirred, both by the deep distress in its material condition and by the powerful challenge of the West to its cultural values. Both self-respect as well as material welfare demanded an integrated solution, on the planes of theory and practice, of philosophy and government.

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[1] "Wir Wollen sein ein eising Volk von Brudoers"
F. Schiller, *Wilhelm Tell*.

II. World Impact on Muslim Opinion

The Muslim community, as pointed out in the previous volume, had two sets of leaders—modernists and traditionists. The first came from the section of the community educated under the system established on the western lines; the second consisted of those trained in the Arabic and Persian schools of the medieval type. The first received the impact of the West directly, but the traditional scholars were also influenced indirectly because the political and economic environment in which they lived was permeated by the West, and also because their contacts with their fellow-religionists both of India and West Asia brought them face to face with changing world conditions. They came up against the modernising culture of the Muslim countries when they went abroad and visited their holy places.

The appeal of the modernist Muslim thinkers was naturally addressed to the educated. But although they formed a small group, their importance was far greater than their numbers indicated. The Muslim intelligentsia consisting of the professional classes, businessmen engaged in the modern type of trade and industry, land-owners, the services, and journalists and others, claimed the leadership of the community and formed its public opinion. The Government of India recognised them specially as a separate group because they desired its cooperation. The Government chose to consult them and utilized them for their own purposes. The consideration and favour shown to them greatly added to their weight in the estimation of the community and therefore enhanced their capacity to sway its mind.

The traditionist leaders—the Ulama, had undoubted hold on the sentiments of the masses. But their appeal was more religious than political. They could rouse the illiterate and the poor artisans, peasants and workers on religious issues, even to acts of frenzy involving sacrifice of life. Some of them played a heroic part in the freedom struggle but on the whole their role was secondary, both in national and communal movements. Their contribution to the winning of independence was of considerable value, but their ranks were politically divided and their importance overshadowed by the modern western-educated leaders. Even for the non-westernised masses, politics which meant bread and butter, was greater attraction than pure religion.

The influence of the traditionists was gradually dwindling. The growing political consciousness in the country, and the realization of the futility of the religiously inspired *Jihad*, as demonstrated in the movement of Syed Ahmed of Bareli and the Revolt of 1857 were turning the attention from the traditional hostility against the Christian rulers to the more sophisticated modern methods of political agitation. The proper leadership in these movements could only be supplied by the western elite. The hold of the Ulama, who were wedded to the old ways of opposing the enemies of Islam and lacked the resourcefulness needed for conducting political campaigns in modern conditions, was slipping. They were unable to create an effective organisation, which required large funds not at their command, or to prosecute a sustained constitutional or legal programme.

The modernist leaders stole a march over them by their skilful exploitation of the fears and jealousies of the Muslims against the Hindus and at the same time they endeavoured to retain the sympathy and favour of Government. The well-to-do Muslims, landholders, merchants and professionals supported them.

Muslim reaction against the western assertion of cultural and moral superiority and political domination passed through three stages. The first stage was one of hurt pride, which forced them to retreat within and into isolation. It lasted till the Revolt of 1857. In this stage the Muslim mind started looking inwards, so as to resuscitate its elan of old times and to recover its lost power. The movement was initiated by Shah Waliullah of Delhi and culminated in the holy war (*Jihad*) led by Syed Ahmad Shahid against the British.

The failure of *Jihad* and the ruthless suppression of the Revolt ushered in the second stage. The Muslims realized the hopelessness of armed resistance, accepted the irremovability of British rule, and prepared themselves for reconciliation with the rulers. They undertook the reinterpretation of the tenets of Islam in order to impress the West with their conformity with progressive ideas. The leader of this phase was Syed Ahmad Khan who passed away in 1898.

His death coincided with a fresh turn in the affairs of the Islamic world of India. The happenings abroad exercised considerable influence upon the opinion of the Musalmans of India. It is therefore necessary to take a bird's-eye-view of the developments in the Muslim world outside. By the end of the nineteenth century most Muslim countries had passed under the sway of European empires or had come under European spheres of influence. The Ottoman Empire which alone still maintained its independence and suzerainty was fast tottering to its fall and dismemberment.

The western assault was, however, not purely political. It struck at the roots of Islamic life and civilization. Thus it menaced both political power and religious ideology. The Muslims were bound to take up the gauntlet, but their reactions assumed a number of forms. Some thinkers totally rejected western culture and declared unyielding, out and out resistance to imperialist pretensions; some pragmatically approved those features which had practical utility, but repudiated religious, moral and social ideals; others sought reconciliation between the two civilizations without compromising the basic principles of Islam; still others attempted combinations and permutations of these elements. In general whatever the attitude it was based on a superficial understanding of modern culture and ordinarily failed to appreciate its philosophical and sociological foundations. Muslim writers did not, on the whole, show a proper apprehension either of the rational, critical, non-authoritarian approach of the western mind or of the effect of material and economic factors on social evolution.

The earliest reaction was to adopt the features of western culture in the sphere of practical activity—e.g., military technique, administrative devices and scientific and industrial knowledge. But this ntrusion created imbalance and conflict within society and in the mind of the individual. It raised religious, moral and social issues. Some of the fundamental problems were universalism versus nationalism, faith versus reason, divine law and tradition (*taqlid*) versus human law and innovation (*tajdid*), integration of religion and state versus their differentiation. in other words, the spheres of jurisdiction of church and state.

III. EARLY MUSLIM THINKERS

The outstanding thinker who exercised enormous influence on Muslim opinion was Jamal-al-Din Al-Afghani (1837-97), a pan-Islamist but a modernist reformist. His aim was two-fold (1) "to dam the torrent of secular nationalism converging upon the East from the West,[2]" by adopting western rationalist values, science and technology, and (2) to restore the past glory of Islam by developing activism and dynamism and abandoning the life of renunciation, resignation and fatalist inaction.

Jamal-al-Din Afghani was a restless fiery spirit. He moved from country to country igniting the ambitions and passions of the Muslims. He reminded them that if Islamic civilization had fallen upon evil times and was succumbing to the assault of the West, it was due to the weakness of the Muslim peoples and governments. The remedy, he pointed out, was the revival of religion and reassertion of political power, for the two were indissolubly linked together. His activities had a tremendous effect upon Islamic countries. His pan-Islamism inspired the pan-Arab movement. His exhortations led to the constitutional agitation in Iran. His criticism of Syed Ahmed Khan persuaded the Ulama in India to work for independence in cooperation with the Indian Nationa Congress. Afghani gave the clarion call for Muslim resurgence and crystallized the Muslim mind in its anti-western stance, by pointing out that the principal enemy of Islam was Europe in general and Great Britain in particular.

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[2] Nuseibeh, H.K., *The Ideas of Arab Nationalism*, p. 122.

His pupil Shaikh Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), sometime Rector of the University of Al Azhar, Cairo, spread the mission of his master through teaching. Numerous scholars both inside Al Azhar and outside became his pupils. His *magnum opus,* the exegesis of the Quran was a departure from the previous commentaries as it embodied modern methods of exposition and exhibited more rational and broader perspectives than its predecessors. Abduh's endeavour to present the Quranic teachings as in line with modern thought paved the way for transition from the past to the present.

Among his disciples was the eminent writer and journalist Muhammad Rashid Ridha (1865-1935), the well-known editor of *al-Manar* of Cairo. He was a pan-Islamist who wrote a comprehensive treatise on the Caliphate, which laid stress upon the theory that Islam comprehends spiritualities as well as temporalities. He was, however, an advocate of popular sovereignty and consultative government. But he had no understanding of a democratic system of government. His main contribution was to assign special importance to the life and character of the Prophet and present him as the perfect man—an exemplar to his followers. On the whole, his views were more conservative and his attitudes narrower than those of his master.

The school founded by Afghani taught the revival of ecumenical Islam guiding and directing religious and secular affairs of the Muslims. At the same time it appropriated some modern notions regarding liberty, equality, individuality, science, nature, etc. but found justification for them in the *Quran*. In religion it exalted faith over reason and universalism over nationalism. It was temperamentally traditionist and conservative and had no use for modern criticism in evaluating religious beliefs.

There were other schools of thought which showed more genuine and more radical involvement in the West. But they were less popular and their views were less influential than those of Afghani and his followers. They are interesting for they adopted liberalism in religion and nationalism, democracy, constitutionalism and representative government in politics. They advocated reappraisal of the canon law (*shariat*) with a view to bringing it in consonance with modern social trends. So far as moral values were concerned they agreed with the school of Afghani in rejecting the medieval ideals of otherworldliness and passivity and in adopting the gospel of self-assertion and action.

Taha Husain, one of the leading liberal thinkers called upon the Muslims to develop an independent mind in these words : "We cannot live in this age demanding all the political and intellectual independence enjoyed by the people of Europe, while we remain dependent on them for all that nourishes the intellect and the feelings in science, philosophy, literature and the arts."[3]

The protagonists of nationalism were many. Among them the noted exponents were Mustafa Kamal of Egypt (1874-1908) who revived the Nationalist Party on the basis of territorial patriotism and secularism. Another was Abdur Rahman al Kawakabi (1849-1902) who was a believer in Arab traditions, an upholder of Islamic beliefs and principles, a nationalist, a constitutionalist, and a strong supporter of the western form of democracy.

Thus before the turn of the century Islamic thinkers were confronted with all the problems of religion, social and individual conduct, politics, etc. The old values collided with the new—loyalty to person against loyalty to impersonal institutions; belonging to family, clan, tribe, religious community versus incorporation in nation-state; preservation of the traditional in knowledge and social institutions versus change and progress; self-criticism and self-authorization as opposed to self-suppression and blind obedience to authority; freedom of the will versus fatalism; the universal society (*Ummat-i-Muhammadiyah*) contrasted with nationalism; the acceptance or rejection of the Islamic code of virtues, injunctions and prohibitions.

The modernist movement arising in a still medieval economic milieu tended to prefer and accept the outer features of European practice without understanding and assimilating its theoretical and sociological foundations. The Indian Muslims though educated under two different systems were steeped in the common traditions of their religio-political order; with a difference in emphasis, namely, the western educated were more interested in the political aspects of their problem while the recipients of the old learning laid greater stress on religion.

But till the beginning of the twentieth century Muslim politics were largely concerned with questions of loaves and fishes, share in services, government patronage and favour, educational expansion. As communal solidarity was instrumental in securing these ends, efforts were directed towards promoting the consciousness of Muslim unity, which has been loosely described as Muslim nationalism. This naturally called for accentuating the individuality of the community and its distinction from the other communities, the Hindus in particular. Hence the search for the distinguishing characteristics of Islam—its basic doctrines and practices and their relevance to modern life, also an understanding of its role in history and in the future.

Upto this time these matters were considered from a defensive point of view. The leaders of the community were apologetic, anxious to prove the credibility of Islam and its compatibility with the progressive and liberal ideas of the West. They appealed to history to bear witness to the greatness of their political and cultural achievements. History was thus utilized to justify the faith. The failures were either glossed over or attributed to deviation from the true teachings of Islam and admission of accretions incompatible with Islam.

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[3] Gibb, H.A.R., *Studies in* the *Civilization of Islam*, p. 278.

Jamal al Din Afghani and his school, however, were changing over from defence to offence. For them Islam was perfect, both as a religion and as a socio-political order. They explained that the decline of the Muslim society and state was due to the feebleness of Muslim government and people's loss of faith in religion and not to any defect in Islam. The remedy lay in reviving religion and restoring state power.

IV. IQBAL

Among the Muslim leaders of thought in India in the twentieth century the most eminent and at the same time the most influential was Muhammad Iqbal. Born at Sialkot in 1873 he began his studies under an oriental scholar who taught him Persian and Arabic and introduced him to the *Quran*. Then he shifted to an English school and pursued his higher studies at Lahore in the Government College affiliated to the Panjab University. He was endowed with unsual intellectual gifts. He was an intensely emotional youth, quick in receptiveness and response but of unstable temper. His acutely sensitive, highly imaginative and mystically inclined mind converted him after he had sowed his wild oats into a deeply religious devotee. A devouring passion for Islam, a pride in its great glory and a burning shame for its present humiliation possessed his soul.

He was born to poetry. Even as a boy he composed verses in Urdu. His genius unfolded as he advanced in years, and he achieved the rare distinction of mastery over two media of expression—Urdu and Persian. In both of them he composed epoch-making verses which will abide so long as the languages last.

Religion, philosophy and literature were his main interests. His academic career was brilliant and it was crowned by an appointment in the faculty of his College. The search for knowledge took him to Cambridge and Munich. In Cambridge he came in touch with MacTaggart, the commentator of Hegel. In Munich where he submitted a thesis on "The Development of Metaphysics in Iran" he studied German thought. In the Government College, Lahore, he had been a favourite pupil of T.W. Arnold, an admirer of Islamic culture. For a few months he taught Arabic in the London University and was also called to the Bar.

Then in 1908 he returned home. He took up the Professorship of Philosophy in the Government College and was allowed to set up practice in law. Gvernment service had become irksome to him as it placed limits upon the expression of his thought and his independence. But his heart was not in the legal profession either. So for thirty years he wooed the poetic muse. These thirty years constitute a period which brought him phenomenal success and world fame.

Before his departure for Europe Iqbal had already won recognition as a poet with a bright promise. Mellifluence of diction, freshness of phrase-making, richness of imagination, startling originality of images and metaphors, melodiousness of verse—all stamped him out as a literary star of the first magnitude. Mastery of form, however, did not accompany yet any departure from traditional poetic thought.

But the revolution of mind was on the way. The process started in Europe, where he stayed for three critical years in its politics and thought—years which led to the disaster of the First World War.

Europe of the first decade of the twentieth century impressed a non-European as a boiling human cauldron seething with hatred and thirst for blood. The imperialisms of the sated nations—UK and France, of the late-coming unsated nations—Germany and Italy and the ambitious nations greedy for expansion like Russia, were in mortal competition. Nation was competing with nation for extending markets, spheres of influence, exploitation. This macabre dance enthralled the leaders of European politics, but it sent convulsions of horror and perturbation into the bodies of the Muslim states. For largely the target of West's expansion were the Muslim countries of Asia and Africa.

Iqbal reacted violently against both the imperialist spectre and the nationalist beast. Western humanity appeared to have abandoned all the ideals dear to a religious minded, humanity-loving mystic. It is not surprising that now onwards he was a confirmed enemy of nationalism. In his poems written after return from Europe he exclaimed :

هر ملک ملک ماست—که ملک خدائے ماست

(Every country is my country, for every country is the country of my God.)

And again

تفریق ملل حکمت افرنگ کا مقصود
اسلام کا مقصود فقط ملت آدم ۔

(Division of nations is the end of European wisdom, the end of Islam is only the nation of man.)

Besides what Iqbal saw in Europe, what he heard from India gave him a rude shock. In 1905 the Partition of Bengal was brought about by Curzon, who wanted to throw a bone of contention among the Indian people. The Partition roused a terrific agitation which was conducted very largely by the Hindus.

The Muslims who considered the Partition as a concession to their interests were offended by the agitation and relations between the two communities became embittered, as Curzon intended.

Iqbal who deeply resented the treatment of the Muslims by the European powers was touched to the quick by the attitude of the Hindus. The delicate flower of nascent nationalism in him withered under the fierce blast of such ungenerous and self-centred extravagance. Iqbal who had sung of "*Hindustan Hamara*"(Our India) was disillusioned. The Partition drove out of his mind India and replaced it by Islam. Europe had turned him into a pan-Islamist anti-nationalist, writhing under a sense of humiliation and frustration. The agitation against the Partition made him a rank communalist. Later developments in the world and in India confirmed him in his attitude.

The first fifteen years of his life after return from Europe saw the genius of the poet take wings and soar above the empyrean. But he was a lone eagle ranging the skies. He led a life withdrawn from the noise and tumult of the world. In those days he wrote largely in Persian and a little in Urdu, thus symbolically proclaiming his faith that Islam is not local but universal.

His public activity was limited to an annual excursion to the meetings of the Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam where he read a poem composed for the occasion. But each poem was surcharged with emotion, recalling the glories of the past, bemoaning the sad plight of the present, summoning the faithful to arise, awake and rest not till the destiny of Islam was fulfilled. Each poem was an event, a clarion call to the faithful. Its effect, however, was fleeting: plenty of sobs and tears followed by silence and forgetfulness broken by the next year's recitation.

It was in these years that world shaking events happened: wars came, empires were overthrown, dynasties toppled, and hallowed institutions abruptly ended. India, too, both Muslim and non-Muslim, under the urge of Gandhiji's non-violent command stirred and heaved. Some of these occasions were marked by an appropriate poem, otherwise the even tenor of life continued.

In 1927 Iqbal took the plunge and entered the political arena. The last ten years of his life were devoted to the realization of his programme for the Muslim community. But Iqbal was not destined to see the actual fulfilment of his dream. He died in 1938. The following verse was chosen by him for his epitaph:

سرودے رفتہ باز آید کہ ناید ۔ نسیمے از حجاز آید کہ ناید
سرآمد روزگارے ایں فقیرے ۔ دگر دانائے راز آید کہ ناید

(The vanished song may come back or may not; The breeze that
blew from Hejaz may return or may not,

> The days of this recluse have come to an end. Another knower
> of the secret may come or may not.)[4]

The two intellectual forces which moulded Iqbal's mind were: (1) the *Quran*, and (2) Western philosophy and science, especially of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when anti-intellectual philosophies such as those of Nietzsche, William James, and Henry Bergson were becoming popular. But the experience of life, of men and affairs, of the early years of the twentieth century in India and Europe were powerful formative influences which conditioned his mind and shaped his attitudes towards men and institutions.

In India the stream of religious philosophy was flowing embanked by intuition, emotion and romanticism. As pointed out in the description of the views of such thinkers as Tagore and Aurobindo Ghose the foundation of their philosophies were laid upon subjective experience.

Iqbal who considered the same problems which the other Indian thinkers were concerned with but in the frame of the Islamic culture could not escape the influence of his surroundings. He, too, even more emphatically, laid stress upon the supremacy of emotion over intellect.

About reason and philosophy he wrote:

تو اپنی خودی اگر نه کهوتا - زناری برگساں نه هوتا
هیگل کا صدف گهر سے خالی - هے اس کا طلسم پر خیالی
انجام خرد هے بے حضوری - هے فلسفه زندگی سے دوری
افکار کے نغمه هائے بے صوت - هیں ذوق عمل کے واسطے موت

So far as the study of the *Quran* is concerned Iqbal's approach was definitely orthodox. He believed it to be a divinely inspired book whose very words were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad by God. He held the view that while the religious experience of the Prophet was similar to that of the mystic saint, it was more exalted. 'The unitary experience', the vision of the Ineffable is common to both, to the saint it means repose, self-sufficiency, quiescence and finality, "for the Prophet it is the awakening, within him, of world-shaking psychological forces calculated to completely transform the human world" He returns from the experience "to insert himself into the sweep of time with a view to control the forces of history, and thereby to create a fresh world of ideals."[5] The *Quran* and the Prophet were for the Muslims the highest and the most binding authority.

Iqbal had studied western philosophy extensively. His writings show his indebtedness to both ancient and modern philosophers. He considered Plato as the anti-thesis to Islam whose ideas influenced Muslim thinkers to the detriment of Islam. Aristotle was more favourable to his trend of thought, but he was too materialistic to be wholly approved.

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[4] Iqbal, M. *Zarbi Kalim*, *Kulliyat*, p. 237.

[5] Iqbal, M., six lectures on the reconstruction of Islamic thought.

Among the moderns his preference was for Leibnitz, Nietzsche, Bergson, Ward and the neo-Realists. His philosophy borrowed with modifications elements from them, for example, the monads of Leibnitz, which seem to have been transformed into the hierarchy of selves or egoes, the superman of Nietzsche, which implied the concept of perfectness, the intuitive source of knowledge of Bergson, which was the supranormal or mystical function of Iqbal's ego.

Though he built his thought structure on the basis of the *Quran* his arguments were largely drawn from western philosophy. He strove to prove :

(1) That the *Quran* teaches the most perfect religion, which is a sure guide in the spiritual and temporal affairs of man;

(2) The *Quran* is the final revelation of God. It completes the teachings of all former revelations and closes the need for further revelation;

(3) The teachings of Islam are superior to the teachings of all other religious systems; they are universal, eternal and unalterable;

(4) Muhammad is the last of the Prophets;

(5) With the light provided by the *Quran* and the Prophet humanity must depend upon itself to achieve the ends prescribed.

Iqbal was convinced that he had produced a revolution of thought about Islam and that he had declared its true message to a distracted and errant world. About himself he says:

در جہاں خورشید نوزائدہ ام - رسم و آئین فلک نادیدہ ام
نغمہ من ازجہان دیگر است - ایں جرس را کاروان دیگر است
ہیچ کس روزے کہ من گویم نہ گفت - ہم چوں فکرمن در معنی نہ سفت
سر عیش جاوداں خواہی بیا - ہم زمین ہم آسمان خواہی بیا

In the world I am the new born sun, I am the custom and the law of an unseen heaven;
My song is from another world and my bells ring for another caravan;
None has unveiled the secret which I utter, none has strung the pearls of meaning as I have done.
If you wish to learn the secret of eternal happiness come to me if you desire the earth as well as heaven come to me.

It is difficult to accept the claim and the estimate at its face value. Iqbal was in fact more a poet than a philosopher. His poetry is impregnated with philosophical, religious and moral ideas, and he is probably unique as an Urdu poet of abstract thought. His philosophy, however, floats in the air on the wings of his poetry—attractive but unconvincing. Cantwell Smith, a close student of Islamic thought, history and politics, points out

"He is the Sufi who attacked Sufism, and perhaps the liberal who attacked liberalism. The historical consequence of his impact seems on the whole to have served to weaken liberalism among Indian Muslims and to help replace it with an illiberal nationalistic and apologetic dynamism."[6]

It may be added that although Iqbal was very conscious that he was the bearer of a new message and the renovator of the original teachings of Muhammad, he was really not sure about the nature of his contribution. At times he strongly affirmed that his attempt was unprecedented, but at others he advocated the need for preserving the tradition. The example of the first is in the lines:

خیزو پا بر جادہ دیگر بنہ - جوش سودائے کہن از سر بنہ

Israr-e-Khudi

تقلید سے ناکارہ نہ کر اپنی خودی کو
کر اس کی حفاظت کہ یہ گوہر ہے یگانہ

Kulliyat

The opposite is asserted in

اجتہاد اندر زمان انحطاط
قوم را برہم ہمی پیچد بساط

Ramooz-e-Khudi

What was his message? Iqbal looked into the past to distil the elements of greatness in its history. He put the mirror up to the present to discover the shortcomings and weaknesses and consequent humiliations which beset the Muslim peoples all over the world, and he gazed into the future, to the alluring vision of a renascent Islam.

However, the history, the warning and the message were not new. In the Islamic world warners had come from time to time. In the nineteenth century Jamal al-Din Afghani and his disciples had called upon the Muslims to set their house in order so that they could meet the challenge of the West. In India Shah Waliullah and his school had even earlier than Afghani sounded a similar note.

The substance of Iqbal's teachings was not very different, but the manner of presenting them was his own. He clothed his ideas in philosophical arguments which the educated Muslims could understand and he decked them out in gorgeous imagery and ravishing sound with all the wounderful resources of the poetic muse at his command.

The message was to remind the individual of his exalted status in the scheme of the universe and of his high destiny which could be achieved by will and determination.

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[6] Cantwell Smith, W., *Islam in Modern History, P.* 44, note.

The concept of the individual or the self is the centre and focus of his philosophy. He approaches this concept through his theory of knowledge. According to him knowledge has two aspects—one intuitive and the other phenomenal. The intuitive knowledge is not based upon sense data, is not limited by time and space. It is not mediated experience, it is unique, immediate, unanalysable, and inexpressible in words. It is the experience of the whole, of the real as such, it is mystical experience.

It is, however, dynamic and progressive. It exists potentially in every self and flashes across the mind from time to time. But it may be cultivated as the mystics indicate, and it is perfected in the prophetic vision. The mystic's quest leads him to inner illumination and peace. the Prophet who is possessed by this consciousness endeavours to change the world moved by the power of the inspiration.

The ordinary knowledge, on the other hand, is rooted in bodily sensations and progresses through perception to concepts or intellection. This phenomenal consciousness, the intellect, is diversified into subject and object, and grows through appropriating the external world and mastering it. But the self which is rooted in the supra-normal intuitional consciousness is intimately related to the phenomenal self which functions in the world of time and space. In fact the higher self is not a principle separated from its relational consciousness. But the higher self proceeds from the command of God (*Amr*) and its phenomenal counterpart, the bodily, is the creation (*Khalq*) of God.

The ego of the self is a finite centre of experience, and is real. The mind and body are a unity in action. The mind is characterized by originality and spontaneity; the body is mechanical and its activity is repetitive.

The finite selves are a multitude which form a hierarchy—a series of grades of being. The lowest order consists of matter without life and mind but possessing the capability of evolving. The evolution of the material leads to the appearance of the living—vegetable, and then animal selves. The animal culminates in man. God is the ultimate self, the absolute ego. He is infinite and eternal. His infinity "consists in the infinite inner possibilities of creative activity." But it is man's though which abstracts time and space and other attributes like creativeness, knowledge, omnipotence, etc. from the absolute concreteness and totality of His creative activity. He is the first and the last, both immanent and transcendent.

The finite ego-man, originating in time is the highest member of the creation. But man is a growing and developing ego, striving to attain the qualities that are perfected in the divine self.

Thus in the system of selves man occupies a position only next to God. All other creatures are inferior to him. Man is not a static but a developing ego. He attains his highest destiny through his own effort. The object of the effort is to strengthen, integrate and perfect the self, so that it becomes conscious of its powers and by its activity and energy "brings out oceans from the stream of life." The life of the self is dynamic, for it flourishes on the creation of new aims and ends and in pursuing them with passionate attachment and love. Any course of thought or action which weakens or negates the self ought to be rejected.

Iqbal's view of the relation between the infinite self, God, and the finite self man, may be compared with the Hindu view. The latter designates God by the term *Paramatma* (absolute self) and man by the term *Jivatma* (individual self); the first is unlimited, eternal, self-existing, the second is limited by time and place and is caused. Iqbal's concept of God as both transcendant and immanent is more akin to the Hindu thought than to the Quranic; for the latter attributes to God transcendent qualities. The God of the *Quran* in both His aspects—compassionate and merciful or powerful and dominant, is exalted far above man and is incomparable, unapproachable, distant.

Iqbal treats God like the Hindu thought as a friend and companion (Sakha). His poems *Shikwah* and *Jawab-i-Shikwah* chidingly complain against God's unfairness and neglect of the Muslims and God's reply blaming the Muslims for deviating from his law. Man is the vicegerent of God (*naib-i-haq*) and his progress consists in becoming God's cooperator.

خودی کو کر بلند اتنا که هر تقدیر سے پهلے
خدا بندے سے خود پوچھے بتا تیری رضا کیا هے

(*Kulliyat*)

But the ideal of the life of the individual is power:

زندگی کشت است و حاصل قوت است
شرح رمز حق و باطل قوت است

(*Asrar-e-Khudi*)

وحدت کی حفاظت نهیں بے قوت بازو
هے جرم ضعیفی کی سزا مرگ مفاجات

(*Kulliyat, Zarb-e-Kalim*)

In another verse this ideal is stated in these words:

یقین محکم عمل پیهم محبت فاتح عالم
جهاد زندگی میں هیں یه مردوں کی شمشیریں
قهاری و غفاری و قدوسی و جبروت
یه چار عناصر هوں تو بنتا هے مسلمان

(*Kulliyat* p. 275)

These ideas determined Iqbal's attitude towards the practical problems of man and society.

The moral end of man was the perfection of the self, ego or personality. Therefore whatever contributed to the integration, intensification and invigoration of the self is good and whatever leads to the contrary *viz.*, disintegration, fluidity and feebleness is evil. The process of perfection has a goal, namely, godliness or the acquisition of the attributes of God and becoming like Him تعمیر خودی میں ہے خدائی ۔ (in the building of self lies godliness).

God has two main attributes—*Jamal* and *Jalal*, beauty and majesty, mercy and authority. The one reflects His aspect of love, the other of power. Hence moral discipline of man consists in the cultivation of love and power. Love is the principle of creation, power of preservation. Love unites man in social wholes, and draws man to God or to perfection. Power is necessary to obtain mastery over what is not God, namely, nature, or that which is Satanic in the individual and the group. Thus Islam attaches the highest value to the spiritual development of the individual and at the same time does not neglect the worldly.

Love and not reason should be the guide and director of man's actions:

عقل در پیچک اسباب و علل ۔ عشق چوگان باز میدان عمل
عقل در سرمایه از بیم و شک است ۔ عشق راعزم و یقین و لاینفک است

(Reason is intertwined in the coils of cause and ground, love is the player of polo in the field of action. Reason's capital consists of doubt and apprehensions, but from love determination and faith are inseparable).

Love alone makes man's self resolute and resplendent:

نقطه نوری که نام و خودی است ۔ زیر خاک ما شرارے زندگی است
از محبت می شود پاینده تر ۔ زنده تر سو زنده تر تابنده تر

(The centre of light which is called the self, is the flame of life under our earthly frame; it is made more constant, more alive, more fiery, more scintillating by love.)

Man, however, does not march on the path of life alone. The individual and society are mirrors of each other. "they are like the chain and its pearls, like the galaxy and its stars". The individual acquires worth from society and society is constituted by the organisation of individuals. Man's body and soul, his exterior and interior, his eagerness to grow and the regulation of his conduct, his language and tradition, he owes all to society. The individuality of the self is rooted in the plurality of society, the plurality in the self constitutes individuality. The individual is unable to discover aims and ends in isolation, society disciplines him and makes him free.

The association of individuals is necessary for meeting the struggle of life, the end being the expansion of personality, and the disclosure of the potentialities of men. Iqbal says:

فرد را ربط جماعت رحمت است - جوہر اورا کمال از ملت است

But the perfection of personality is achieved only through the guidance of the prophet, for "the life of the world is bound with his religion and life is impossible without his law."

Society is a collection of individuals bound together by a common end. The character of the end determines the worth and stability of society. Such an end is not acquisition of domination over others accumulation of wealth to pander to sensual pleasures, promotion of material, racial or national interests. Societies which exist to pursue such ends cannot be permanent. They may flourish for some time and secure the welfare of some group but they engender strife, hostility competition and war and constitute a threat to human peace and happiness.

حیات تازہ اپنے ساتھ لائی لذتیں کیا کیا
رقابت خود فروشی نا شکیبائی دوسنا کی

(The new civilization has brought with it what numerous delights --rivalry, vanity, impatience, lust)

فساد قلب و نظر ہے فرنگ کی تہذیب
کہ روح اس مدنیت کی رہ سکی نہ عفیف

(The culture of Eurpoe is corruption of heart and intellect, for the spirit of this civilization could not remain pure).

بیکاری و عریانی و میخواری و افلاس
کیا کم ہیں فرنگی مدنیت کے فتوحات

On the other hand, Islam teaches quite a different set of cultural values—equality, freedom, brotherhood of man, dignity of woman, differentiation of functions among sexes, amelioration of slavery. Islam opposes the division of mankind into nations warring against one another and endeavouring to obtain domination by force and fraud.

Islam stands for the fellowship of all men. It does not admit that ties of race, language, territory or economic interests, should bind man in society. The true bond is that of faith and ideal.

بتان رنگ و خوں کو توڑ کر ملت میں گم ہو جا
نہ تورانی رہے باقی نہ ایرانی و عثمانی
ملت ما از ہند و روم و شام نیست
مرز بوم ما بجز اسلام نیست

(Break the idols of colour and kinship and lose yourself in the community of faith, so that no difference of Turani, Irani and Afghani may remain. My soul neither belongs to India nor Turkey nor Syria, it has no homeland or territory excepting Islam.)

Of this Islamic society he expatiated in moving verse on its glorious past, bewailed in searing dirge its woeful present and forecast a brilliant future. According to him the Muslims of the early times were "world conquerors, world rulers, world protectors, world adorners". The modern world is decked with their splendours and has grown out of their dust. It is true that the Muslims of the present age have lost their virtue, their passion, their faith, but Iqbal does not despair of the future. According to him, "the night will fade away at last before the light of the rising Sun, this garden will again be filled with the song of *Tauhid* (the unity of God)."

He warned Europe not to treat the earth of God as a market place, for the values which it regarded as precious were likely to prove false. "This civilization will commit suicide with its own sword, for the nest built on a fragile branch is bound to be unstable."

His admiration of Islam and detraction of other cultures was perilously akin to the Nazi exaltation of the Aryan race and culture. In a poem composed in Spain after a visit to the mosque of Cordova he exclaimed:

اس کا مقام بلند اس کا خیال عظیم
اس کا سرور اس کا شوق اس کا نیاز اس کا ناز
ہاتھ ہے اللہ کا بندہ مومن کا ہاتھ
غالب و کار افریں کار کشا کار ساز

(*Kulliyat-i-Iqbal,* p.382)

(His status is high, his thought great, his hearing is his joy, his supplication is his glory. The arm of the humble believer is God's arm, dominant, creative, successful, puissant.)

It is difficult to classify Iqbal as a liberal or a conservative. He was a revivalist who believed that Islam taught by Muhammad embodied all the values of modern liberalism, nay, Islam's understanding of these values was far finer and more original than that of the West. Although the West had made great advances in some spheres of culture, they had been built on the foundations laid by the Muslims, e.g., in physical and biological sciences. But the West had repudiated religion. Its principles of social organisation, and its materialistic outlook were leading it towards self-annihilation. The Muslims had no need to look to the West. The only kind of innovation that was permissible was to recover the spirit of faith which inspired the Muslims in the days of the Prophet and his immediate successors.

Iqbal's social philosophy is only apparently liberal, for he ignored and repudiated the basic principles of liberalism—freedom of the mind, independence of the individual from the bondage of authority—religious, social and intellectual: critical examination of the dogmas of religion, morality and politics: society bound by human law made through democratic representative institutions.

Iqbal did not believe in religious criticism, for him Islam was a divinely revealed faith and above and beyond rational discussion.

By 1927 the poet-philosopher had entered public life. He was elected to the Panjab Legislative Assembly. In 1930 he gave evidence before the Simon Commission, and presided over the Allahabad Session of the Muslim League where he presented his scheme for an autonomous Muslim region in the north-west of India as a solution for the communal problem. He attended the Second Round Table Conference, 1931-32 in London. He took an active part in the Muslim Leagues politics and gave weighty support to the League in the preparation for elections under the Government of India Act, 1935. In this connection his crowning success was to convert Jinnah to his point of view on the question of re-distribution of Indian provinces on communal lines Says Jinnah in his foreword to the letters of Iqbal addressed to him, "His views were substantially in consonance with my own and had finally led me to the same conclusion as a result of careful examination and study of the constitutional problems facing India, and found expression in due course in the united will of Muslim India as adumbrated in the Lahore resolution of the All-India Muslim League popularly known as the Pakistan Resolution, passed on 23 March, 1940."[7]

The reputation of Iqbal as the guide, philosopher and friend of the Muslims of India had been growing since his return from Europe in 1908. The publication of his long poem *Asrar-i-Khudi* brought him recognition as the poet of Islam par excellence. Its translation by Prof. R.A. Nicholson and publication in English in 1920 and favourable notice by British thinkers, like McTaggart and Herbert Reade greatly enhanced his prestige in the eyes of his community. The conferment of Knighthood in 1922 put a seal on his fame and established his pre-eminence as a man of letters. It satisfied the pride of the Muslim community for a Muslim poet had gained a position similar to that of Tagore.

He now spoke with redoubled authority. He freely chastised the community for its apologetic, pusillanimous, defensive attitudes and lectured to them on the correct meaning of the *Quran* and the important role of Islam in the world. His poems together with his lectures on "The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam" delivered in Madras and Hyderabad were like the blast of the trumpet. They helped in bringing about a change to an assertive aggressive Islam, confident of its superiority as a religion, philosophy, social, economic and political system.

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[7] *Letters of Iqbal to Jinnah*, published by Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1943, foreword, pp. 4-5.

The influence of Iqbal on politics was three fold. In the first place he gave a great impetus to emotionalism and depreciated to an equal extent the value of reason. The result was a paralysis of clear thinking in politics and an upsurge of unreason leading to violence. Secondly he laid so much emphasis on the uniqueness of Islam and Islamic civilization that he made any political accommodation with other communities almost impossible. In the third place his exclusive reliance upon the factor of religion to the complete neglect of all other factors ideological like patriotism and material like economy, considerably vitiated his historical analysis and sociological formulations. The religious approach prevented a proper understanding of the tendencies of the modern world, and therefore obscured the vision of the future. To no small extent the partition of India is due to his ideas and indoctrination.

His exaltation of feeling and emotion for which he used the word *Ishq* (love) is writ large over all his works—both poetical and philosophical. In a hundred ways and numerous verses he has contrasted love with reason to the detriment of the latter. Some of these have been cited above. His epistemology raises feeling (or intuition) above intellect as a superior source of knowledge. It, therefore, followed logically that the foundation of society should be laid on pure faith which is extra-rational. Iqbal says:

> "Reason is really analytic, and rationalism threatens disintegration to the life of the community which has been bound together by the force of religion," and "the unity of society is based on faith, and faith is not rational but communal."[8]

About reason he says:

غافل از حرد شو اگر فرزانئه

(If you are wise pay no attention to intellect).

For

عشق کے ھی معجزات سلطنت فقر و دیں
عشق کے ادنی غلام صاحب تاج و نگیں
عشق مکان و مکیں عشق زمان و زمیں
عشق سراپا یقین اور یقیں فتح باب

(Dominion, contentment, religion are all miracles of love; the wielders of crown and ring are but humble slaves of love.

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[8] Banu, Razia Farhat, *Khutbat-i-Iqbal* (Urdu), Hali Publishing House, Kitab Ghar, (Delhi) p. 93.

> Love is space and the dweller in space, love is time and earth,
> love is faith incarnate, and faith is the opener of doors).

The society of Islam was the abode of Muslims as the country of England was of the English and Germany of the Germans. "The Muslim society was a mental certainty and not an existence outside the mind" which is true of every society.

But he held that there was a radical difference between the Muslim and other societies. "The basic principle of our society is neither community of language, nor of patria, nor of economic needs but we are all partners in the fraternity which was established by the prophet—on whom be God's praise and peace, for the reason that the source of our beliefs concerning the phenomena of creation is one, and we are all equally inheritors of the traditions which our history has bequeathed to us. Islam is indifferent to all material bonds, and its social system rests upon a specially abstract concept whose embodiment is in the collectivity of persons who are by nature capable of growth and expansion."[9]

The statement is ambiguous. It looks like a contradiction of Iqbal's own philosophy which makes material nature an inherent part of the spirit, and considers the world of time and space as part of the creative activity of the Self. To separate a mental concept from an external existence in the constitution of society appears like a surrender to Platonism which posits the reality of idea and the unreality of phenomena.

تن و جاں را دو تا گفتن کلام است
تن و جاں را دو تا دیدن حرام است

(*Zabur-i-Ajam*, p.216)

> (To call body and soul two is theological disputation. To see body and soul as two is unlawful).

While he lays exclusive emphasis on man's moral and religious needs, Iqbal ignores completely the demands of the body, which cannot be fulfilled without land and its bounties. Society is inconceivable without its territorial attachment, which is as important and as indispensable as its human base.

Again the importance that Iqbal attaches to the religious factor as the explanation of the rise and fall of nations is surely unsustainable, if not altogether unjustified. The factors of kinship and economic need, have played a much greater role in the formation of societies and states than religion. For example, all primitive and ancient states were constituted on the tribal basis, a people, a hereditary nobility and a chosen royal family. The medieval European kingdoms of France, Germany, England, Spain, etc. evolved out of Teutonic, Gothic and other tribes which settled in different parts of Europe on the decline of the Roman Empire. Their conversion to Christianity had only a marginal effect upon their political unification.

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[9] *Ibid.* p. 90.

The attempts of some warlike and ambitious kings like Charlemagne, the Ottos, and Fredericks, to use the Roman Catholic church or the Papacy to establish empires comprising all the Christian peoples completely failed, not because of the short-comings of religion but because of the emergence of powerful economic forces which shattered the feudal organisation of society.

The Achaemenids were petty princes of Aryan stock who ruled in the western region of Iran. They gradually acquired prominence and extended their power. On attaining the imperial status they adopted the Zoroastrian religion. Their successors after half a millenium the Sasanians, were confronted with the choice between Mani and Zoroaster. The Iranian state was not thus the product of the Zoroastrianism or Islam.

It is altogether unhistorical to hold that religion is the sole or even the main organising factor in the formation of societies and states. The claim that it is a cementing force is equally weak. The history of Islam both political and religious, furnishes ample evidence of the untenableness of this view. The history of Islam abounds in conflict and war, Alids versus Omayyads, Shunbiah versus Omayyads. Shias versus Sunnis. Fatimids versus the Abbasids; Ghaznavids, Buyids, and Saljukids against the Caliphate of Baghdad; the Sunni Ottoman Turks against the Shiah Safavis of Iran; the Mughals of India against the Uzbegs of Central Asia and the Shiah sultans of the Deccan; the Turks against the Arabs, and so on. Even today in spite of the threat of western imperialism and Israeli aggression there is little sign of Muslim or even Arab unity.

So far as religion is concerned Iqbal sought to minimise the differences among the Muslim sects. According to him they were only minor matters, though the Mullahs exaggerated the points and condemned one another indiscriminately as *Kafirs*. But this was not serious as the sects agreed on the major questions of faith, and as the differences were always superseded in a synthesis. This opinion is contrary to facts. For whatever the nature of the differences they often led to violence and bloodshed, as exemplified in the relations of the Kharijites, Mutazilites, Shiahs, Idrisites of north Africa, Mahdavis of Sudan, Sannusis of Liberia, Wahhabis of Arabia, Ismailis, Qaramitas, etc., persecutors and blood-spillers of one another.

The fact of the matter is that religion is a complex affair—a matter of faith, of inner attitudes and external behaviour, of dogmas and doctrine, rites and ceremonies, of discipline and organisation. Iqbal's attempt to identify Islam with two self-evident propositions, viz., (1) "that God is one, and (2) that Muhammad is the last of the line of those holy men who have appeared from time to time in all countries and in all ages to guide mankind to the right ways of living"[10] is an over-simplification. These propositions together with all the injunctions of the *Quran* concerning matters of belief, worship, individual and collective conduct—spiritual and temporal, gave rise to numerous interpretations according to the differences of approach of the interpreters and the spirit of the times in which they lived.

That is how sects, cults, schools, orthodoxies, heterodoxies, dissents, heresies and schisms have arisen in all religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity. And Islam is no exception. It is not possible to distinguish one religion from another in this matter, as all have been equally the victims of nonconformity and dissidence, and factional quarrel. This is one of the principal reasons why such a protean phenomenon as religion cannot serve as a stable base for the structure of a state.

That within the Islamic world itself attempts were constantly made to keep politics apart from religion is borne out by history.

It is generally recognised that the Umayyad Caliphate was maintained on the basis of the racial supremacy of the Arabs over the non-Arab Muslims. The Umayyads are known for their indifference to Islam. They were responsible for separating the religious function of the Caliph from the secular—Imamate and Amirate, in stark contradiction to the basic Islamic conception of the unity of the two.

The Abbasids widened the gulf. The appearance of Sufis and Ulama who were devoted exclusively to religious pursuits, was a breach in the citadel of unity of religious and worldly life.

This separation was accentuated by the Abbasids when they departed from the pristine simplicity of Islam and adopted the pomp and show of the great Persian emperors, imitating their customs and manners, their lofty exclusiveness, and royal courtly etiquette. They borrowed the principles of government and procedures of administration from the Byzantine and Sasanide chanceries. Henceforward many of the great ideals and principles of life which Muhammad had taught and his immediate successors enforced were abandoned in practice.

The Muslim monarchs and Sultans tore the unity of the Islamic polity (*Millat*) into shreds, shrunk the concept of the *Millat* into a minimum of regulations about personal laws and religious rites. They left the administration of *Shariat* to *Ulama* and in the affairs of Government followed *la raison d'etat* rather than the canon law. The Muslim societies retained the husk but let go the kernel. The ideas of equality of man, dignity of woman, emancipation of slaves, of aid to the poor, the needy, the orphaned and the widowed, of charity, of avoidance of imperial dominion and expansion by arms, and others were disregarded. Mighty empires were erected, wealth, power and luxury were pursued, arts—painting, architecture, music, literature, were fostered, the aristocracy of the sword was pampered, the sycophantic theologians and literary writers were encouraged, reliance upon military force replaced moral ends and monarchy by heredity to leadership by popular consent.

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[10] Shamloo, *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal* (Lahore), p. 117.

These developments shook the very foundations of the Muslim states and opened the floodgates of western infiltration. One after another Muslim countries passed under western domination. Political supremacy led to cultural penetration. Both religion and state were threatened. Then came the reaction. Men like Jamal al Din Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Ridha, and Syed Ahmad Khan realized the dangers. But unfortunately they failed to understand the true nature of the forces which were transforming the Muslim world.

What the Muslim peoples were confronted with was not the problem of religious revival, but the question of a radical change, namely, from medievalism to modernism, from static traditional ways to progressivism, from adherence to priestly authority to obedience to self made secular law, from universalism to nationalism, from blind faith to reason. This conflict occupied the minds of the thinkers of Islam throughout the nineteenth century. But during the twentieth, modernism began to gain the upper hand, because of practical considerations and today the victory of rationalism, nationalism and dynamism seems assured. Each Muslim country is developing its own peculiar pattern of society, its own system of government and laws, its own economy based upon the country's resources and opportunities and its own form of culture. Each is becoming conscious of its individuality and its separateness from the others.

Iqbal, who should have known better, fondly imagined that religion was the most potent if not the sole factor, which brought about the rise and decline of peoples and effected revolutions in social organisation. He ignored the material and economic factors almost completely and seemed to be unaware of their powerful and pervasive influence in promoting social and political change.

He gave little consideration to the fact that the basic problems of the whole of India—both Hindu and Muslim, were the same—hunger, want, disease, ignorance, and that they were not amenable to religious treatment, but could only be remedied by political action. Nor did he realize that the demand for independence and the establishment of a responsible and sovereign political system was only a means for the solution of India's basic needs; and that the measures to fulfil these needs could not exercise selective discrimination between communities. In economic matters affecting national welfare, communal differentiation is in the very nature of things impossible.

Unfortunately Iqbal who by upbringing and education was steeped in bourgeois ideology and prejudices had little awareness of the requirements of the masses. His whole attention, as is evidenced by his poetry and speeches, was concentrated on the middle class Muslims who were rapidly growing in numbers and influence in the twentieth century.

Although Iqbal did make verses to laud the workers and peasants and to condemn the capitalists, the trend of his thought was unmistakably directed towards the upper class Muslims. The language of his Urdu poetry—its refined and ornate vocabulary, gorgeous imagery, learned allusions, and elevated diction, is redolent of an easy and sophisticated life. His exhortations for religious life were addressed to the westernized educated youth. His frequent reminders to warlike exploits, military triumphs, martial virtues and vaulting ambition had no relevance to the life of the poor and the down-trodden. The change from Urdu to Persian—the language of an infinitesimal group of Muslims in India, was a clear declaration of bourgeois leanings. Both the political problem as envisaged by him and his proposal for its solution were heavily weighted in favour of the middle class.

It is, however, doubtful whether he contemplated the partition of India and the establishment of a sovereign Muslim state when he placed his scheme before the Annual Conference of the Muslim League at Allahabad, in December 1930.

His analysis of the causes of lack of harmony and cooperation among Indian communities lays emphasis upon bourgeoisie interests:

"Perhaps we suspect each other's intentions and inwardly aim at dominating each other. Perhaps in the higher interests of mutual-cooperation, we cannot afford to part with the monopolies which circumstances have placed in our hands and conceal our egoism under the cloak of nationalism, outwardly simulating a large-hearted patriotism but inwardly as narrow-minded as a caste or a tribe. Perhaps we are unwilling to recognise that each group has a right to free development according to its own cultural traditions."

In order to remove these suspicions and apprehensions he adumbrated his scheme. It was certainly not a scheme for the partition of India into two independent sovereign states. It was only a plan for the redistribution of territories—the portions of India in which the Muslims were in a majority from the rest. He hoped if his plan of amalgamating Panjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan in one autonomous region was adopted, it would solve the problems of India. "It will intensify their (Muslim) sense of responsibility and deepen their patriotic feeling. Thus possessing full opportunity of development within the body politic of India, the North-West Indian Muslims will prove the best defenders of India against a foreign invasion, be the invasion one of ideas or of bayonets."[11] His objective was "to create a harmonious nation."

There is no reference here to the two-nation theory and to the incompatibility of Hindu and Muslim cultures. The differences between them are traced to such prosaic and secular causes as misunderstanding of one another's intentions, fear of dominance and jealousy for possession and privilege.

His plan is a complete repudiation of the most explicit expression of his pet theory:

ہے ترک وطن مات محمود الہی - دے تو بھی نبوت کی صداقت پہ گواہی

(On the renunciation of nationality, God's praise-worthy society comes into being, thou shouldst also bear witness to the truth of the Prophet's message).

In his presidential address at Lahore in March 1932 even the scheme of an autonomous north-western region is not mentioned. All that he is concerned about is contained in this statement:

"It is obvious that no communal settlement, provisional or permament, can satisfy the Muslim community, which does not recognise, as its basic principle, the right of the community to enjoy majority rights in provinces where it happens to be in actual majority. The continuance of separate electorates and the status of the Frontier Province are no doubt assured, but complete provincial autonomy, transfer of power from Parliament to Indian provinces, equality of federal units, classification of subjects, not into federal, central and provincial but into federal and provincial only, majority rights in the Panjab and Bengal, unconditioned separation of Sind, and one-third share in the Centre, constitute no less essential elements of our demand."[12]

These demands obviously do not amount to partition into two separate states. The justification of the demand as recognised by Iqbal was not religious difference but "fear and resentment."[13]

It is not intended to suggest that if Iqbal had been living in 1940, when the Muslim League adopted the resolution on Pakistan, he would not have given his blessings to it. All that is meant is that till his death in 1938, Iqbal had not publicly identified himself with the demand for Pakistan. It cannot, however, be denied that through his poetry, his philosophical writings and public statements he lent strong support to the idea of Muslim separatism. The temper, he fostered, made compromise difficult, if not impossible.

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[11] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 44

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 4[illegible].

V. The Deoband School

The establishment of the Deoband School by the Ulama who had participated in the Revolt of 1857 has been discussed in the previous volume. The two aims of the School were: (1) to propagate among Muslims the pure teachings of the *Quran* and the *Hadith*, and (2) to keep alive the spirit of *Jihad* against the foreign rulers of India.

They realized that the liberation of India was necessary in the interests not only of India, but of the Muslims of the world. But they had the clarity of vision to see that the independence of India could not be achieved without Hindu-Muslim unity and cooperation.

They had welcomed the formation of the Indian National Congress, and when in 1888 Sir Syed Ahmad Khan under the influence of his British mentors counselled the Musalmans to refrain from joining the Congress, the Deoband Ulama condemned Sir Syed's attitude and issued a religious decree (*fatwa*) against Sir Syed's organisation, the Patriotic Association, as well as the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Association whose Secretary and moving spirit was Principal Back of Aligarh College. The attempts of Sir Syed to obtain the cooperation of the Ulama in his plans were repudiated by the authorities of Deoband as the two differed widely in their political attitude.

Till the end of the nineteenth century Deoband lay low for Government kept over it a careful watch. It was eking out an existence in extremely hard conditions—lack of funds was the greatest worry, for those in a position to help were afraid of the frowns of the powers that be, yet the school stuck courageously to its ideals and did not falter in its chosen path.

Among the earliest entrants to the school was Mahmud al Hasan who spent practically all his life in the school, first as a pupil and then as a teacher and principal of the institution.

He was born in 1851 at Bareli and was in Meerut with his father when the Revolt of 1857 broke out. At home he heard the stories of the heroic exploits of the rebels as well as the gruesome tales of British atrocities. He witnessed the widespread ruin of the upper class Musalmans of northern India and the iron entered into his soul.

He joined the Deoband School at the age of 15 and after completing the course of studies became a teacher in 1875-76 A.D. He had studied under such accomplished scholars and affectionate teachers as Muhammad

Qasim Nanautavi and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi. He imbibed from them learning, deep piety and love of freedom.

In 1887-88 he rose to the position of the head of the School. Early in life he had made up his mind about his mission which he pursued till the last day. The object of the mission was liberation of India. In 1905 he began to promote his plans actively, and started his work on two fronts—within the country and abroad. The two were to rise simultaneously in armed revolt and drive the British out of India.

Within India the mission had its headquarters at Deoband and branches in Delhi, Dinapur, Amrot, Karanji Kheda and Chakwal. Outside India Yaghistan, a small independent principality on the north-western frontier, was chosen as the centre of activity. The followers of Syed Ahmad Shahid and Maulavis Inayat Ali and Sharafat Ali who still continued to carry on *Jihad* against the British supported the nucleus of the armed forces. Haji Turang Zai was appointed their leader. The neighbouring tribes—men and volunteers from India, were expected to join them. It was hoped that the Amir of Afghanistan would lend his support.

The armed rising was not planned as a purely Muslim affair. From Panjab the Sikhs and from Bengal the revolutionary party members were invited to cooperate. A house was taken on rent to accommodate them near Mahmud al Hasan's residence in Deoband. These preparations were carried out in secret. Obaidullah Sindhi, a convert from the Sikh community, worked at Deoband and organised the *Jamiat ul Ansar*. Later he was sent to Delhi where the school *Nazarat ul Maarif* was established with Hakim Ajmal Khan and Vaqaral Mulk of Aligarh as patrons.

The year 1911 was critical in the history of the Muslims. The partition of Bengal was revised, the capital of India was transferred from Calcutta to Delhi. The Balkan War was started by the Christian provinces against the Ottoman Empire. This was immediately followed by the First World War in which Turkey fought in alliance with Germany against Britain and her allies. The frontier province of Sinkiang declared war against Britain.

Mahmud al Hasan was greatly excited by these developments and he thought that the time had come for armed action against the British. A plan was prepared and letters inscribed on silk were circulated to all the participants in the plan. Obaidullah was sent to Afghanistan and he planned to proceed to the frontier himself. Unfortunately for the scheme, Amir Habib Ullah could not be persuaded to give his support. On the contrary, he kept the Government of India informed of the activities of the Indian revolutionaries and later of the Indo-German mission which came to Kabul to seek his intervention on the side of the Central powers. Raja Mahendra Pratap and Barkat Ullah were members of the mission who remained in Kabul after the departure of the Germans to continue their effort for the liberation of India.

At this juncture Mahmud al Hasan came to know that the Government of India had decided to arrest him. With the help of Dr. M. A. Ansari of Delhi he hastily left India for Mecca in 1916 and evaded arrest.

On arrival in Mecca he met Ghalib Pasha who was then the Turkish Governor of Hejaz and induced him to give a letter promising full sympathy and support to the Indian revolt against the British. This letter was smuggled into India and its copies were distributed.

When sometimes later Anwar Pasha, the Defence Minister of Turkey and Jamal Pasha, the Commander of the Southern forces arrived in Mecca he asked them to make arrangements for his journey to the Indian frontier, and proposed a visit to Constantinople. But as misfortune would have it, Sharif Husain of Mecca instigated by the British rose in revolt against the Ottoman Empire. Mahmud al Hasan with Husain Ahmad Madni and two other companions were handed over to the British, who exiled them to Malta, where they were kept as prisoners.[14]

On the termination of the War he and his companions were taken to Bombay and released in January 1920. After disembarking from the boat he immediately proceeded to the office of the Khilafat Committee and threw himself heart and soul into the movement in spite of his ailments and advanced age. He visited Aligarh and appealed to the staff and students of the University to boycott the Government-aided institution and join the new National University (Jamia Millia Islamia) which he helped to establish.

He presided over the Conference of the *Jamiat-ul-Ulama* at Delhi and in winding it up on November 21, 1921 gave expression to his political convictions on the politics of India. He called upon the religious leaders of the Muslims to continue their fight for the restoration of Muslim authority over their holy lands and for the liberation of India from the imperialist yoke. He advised them to maintain and strengthen the ties of unity and social cohesion between the communities in these words :

"You should know if the contrary conditions (disunity) prevailed they will make the freedom of India unattainable for all time. The iron claws of the bureaucratic government will grip closer every day and whatever dim imprints of Islamic influence have remained will be wiped off the page of existence, like a letter which is crossed out. Therefore, if the two communities of India and including the martial race of the Sikhs—all the three, will live in friendship and peace, then I cannot understand how a fourth community—however strong it may be, can defeat the common ideals of the Indians by its violence and despotic rule."[15]

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[14] The account is based upon Husain Ahmad Madni's autobiography (*Naqshi Hayat*) published in 1953. In his earlier book, *Safarnama-i-Shaikh-ul-Hind* written in 1922, these facts were either omitted or denied, because the conditions did not permit their revelation.

Five hundred scholars (Ulama) assembled at the Conference signed the decree calling upon the Muslims to non-cooperate with the Government and withdraw from all civil and military services.

Mahmud al Hasan died shortly after the Conference. His mantle fell upon the worthy shoulders of his favourite pupil Husain Ahmad Madni who had been his companion in Malta, and who shared his ideas on Islamic revival and Indian independence.

Husain Ahmad Madni

Husain Ahmad Madni (1879-1957) was the favourite pupil of Mahmud al Hasan at Deoband. But before he could complete the course at the school his father decided to migrate to Mecca in 1316 A.H. (1889-90 A.D.). The whole family consequently left for Mecca. Husain Ahmad spent the next sixteen years of his life mainly in Hejaz, with occasional visits to India. When in 1332 A.H. (1916 A.D.) Mahmud al Hasan arrived in Mecca, Husain Ahmad who had till then taken no interest in politics became an enthusiastic supporter of the mission for India's liberation. The faithful disciple became the confidant and counsellor of his master and accompanied him in his enforced exile and incarceration in Malta.

On release in 1920, he became a zealous worker in the Khilafat and non-cooperation movements.

On the invitation of Abul Kalam Azad, the leader of the non-cooperation movement, he took charge of the nationalist Arabic Madrasa which had been recently started at Calcutta. From here he moved on to Sylhet where he spent the next six years as a teacher of *Hadith*. In 1928 he was selected as the headmaster of Deoband and he spent the next thirty years in the service of Deoband. During this period while he was engaged in his academic duties, he was intensely involved in the struggle for independence. He was sent to jail several times for his political activities and defiance of laws. Nothing —persecution by government, opposition of the Muslim League, attacks of the dissident Ulama and abuses of the irate members of his own community, could move him from his steadfast devotion to the ideals of Indian independence and Hindu-Muslim unity.

Husain Ahmad had entered the field of politics at the instance of his revered teacher and leader Mahmud al Hasan. But his politics were not emotional. His was an intellectual approach to the problems of society and state. This is amply proved by his writings on India's politics and economics and on international affairs.

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[15] *Ibid.*; p. 33.

On religious matters his knowledge was both in depth and breadth extraordinary. But it is amazing how a Maulavi had gathered a vast amount of information on the political and economic history of India and on the international relations of the western powers with Islamic countries. There is no doubt that his residence in Mecca—the hub of the Muslim world, for over a decade and a half and his incarceration in Malta for nearly five years, brought him into contact with many men from Muslim countries as well as Europeans—Germans, Austrians, Italians and others, from whom he learnt a great deal about international affairs.

Unlike Mahmud al Hasan whose ideas lie scattered in his occasional speeches and the reports of his followers, Husain Ahmad has left behind a considerable quantity of writings which contain clear statement of his views.

Like other serious Hindu and Muslim thinkers of the times Husain Ahmad was concerned above everything else with the fundamental problem of the end and aim of man's life both in its infinite inwardness and in its total outer expression in the fellowship of man and nature.

As a Muslim scholar he was convinced that the *Quran*—the word of God, and *Hadith*—the record of the Prophet's sayings and deeds, offered complete guidance in the two realms of human living. It followed that religion was an all-pervasive, an all-comprehensive rule of life, and therefore not only matters of belief, worship and morals ought to be under its direction, but also matters relating to social economic, political and cultural spheres. There can be no discord between eternal and temporal affairs.

A true Musalman, then, is one who seeks to obey the divine will in thought, word and deed, and refuses to obey any authority which commands to the contrary. A necessary consequence of this principle is that a Muslim cannot mortgage his freedom to any earthly rulers, and in no circumstances to a non-Muslim alien whose law and government aim at the ruin of Islamic ideals and ways of living.

It was the religious duty of every Muslim, therefore, to strive to the utmost of his capacity to overthrow the British dominion over India. Numerous passages may be quoted in which Muslims are exhorted to rise against the foreign rulers and in cooperation with the other Indian communities to end their slavery.

This appeal was accompanied with an elaborate justification for revolt. In the first volume of his autobiography out of 336 pages over 200 are devoted to an examination of the destructive consequences of

British imperialism in India. Among the counts are (1) the humiliation of the people by racial and national discrimination and exclusion from higher services; (2) the economic ruin of the country through land revenue administration, and disruption of industry and trade; (3) the misconceived judicial system which encourages litigation and corruption and makes justice too dilatory and too expensive; (4) the elimination of Indians from the processes of law-making; and (5) the moral deterioration of the people as an effect of foreign domination.

In the second volume of the work considerable space is covered by an account of the breaches of solemn agreements and of treacheries of western powers in their dealings with the Muslim countries, especially the Ottoman Empire. It is pointed out that among these powers the record of the British is the blackest.

From these facts the conclusion is inevitable, the British are the most inveterate enemies of Islam, and the Muslims owe it to themselves and their future existence that they should destroy the British Empire which is a menace to all the people of Asia and Africa.[16]

But the redemption of Muslims of the world, according to Madni, depended upon the liberation of India. It was to secure this, that a movement was started with the teachings of Shah Waliullah in the early nineteenth century which continued in the form of the Revolt of 1857. But the ruthless repression following the Revolt slowed their tempo, and a fresh turn had to be given to the struggle. This was done by the Indian National Congress, which realized at the very start the supreme need of communal unity.

Husain Ahmad recognised that the Congress was the chief instrument for seizing power, and in spite of provocations and differences he never wavered in his decision of 1920 to support the organisation, especially after the Congress declaration of 1929 that India's goal was complete independence. His unequivocal stand on the political problem of India and his outright support to the Congress drew him into many controversies.

Among them the one which provoked the bitterest dispute related to his advocacy of Hindu-Muslim unity. He held that the people of India irrespective of religious differences ought to form a united nation in order to secure independence and pursue policies of common welfare. In a speech he stated that the modern nations were constituted on the principle of territoriality and not race or religion.

Iqbal regarded the statement as an attack upon his theory that the only basis of nationality (*Qaum*) was religion, and that nationality founded upon race, language, territory, was accursed. In his view territorial nationality was an unislamic concept. He published an article which argued that neither Arabic philology nor Islamic literature supported Madni's contention. He made uncomplimentary remarks on his learning, and ridiculed him in verse.

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[16] Madni, Husain Ahmad, *Naqsh-i-Hayat* (Urdu) 2 vols.

Husain Ahmad was pressed to write a rejoinder, because Iqbal's views were likely to do a great deal of damage to the nationalist cause. This is contained in a monograph entitled 'United Nationality and Islam' (*Mutahadda Qauimyat aur Islam*)."[17]

It discusses with great scholarship two aspects of the problem—(1) the meaning and definition of the term "*Qaum*" and its distinction from "*millat*"; and (2) the views of the *Quran*, *Hadith* and Islamic history on the problem.

He refers to the Arabic lexicons of early, middle and recent times to prove that the word '*Qaum*'—apart from other meanings, denotes any group of men and women bound together in the pursuit of a common purpose—not necessarily religious.

The usage of the *Quran* confirms this meaning, for it speaks of the common nationality of the prophets of God and their unbelieving people, e.g., Muhammad and the Quraish. The *Quran* also contemplates a community consisting of groups following different religions, e.g., the followers of Ad and Faraun.

The example of the Prophet himself, however, is the most convincing argument in favour of this interpretation. For in the fourteenth year of his prophethood Muhammad united the Jewish tribes of Medina with his Muslim followers by a solemn covenant to fight against the pagan Arabs who were preparing to attack Medina. The terms of the agreement were that each party would be free to follow its own religion, but in all other matters the Muslims and the Jews would be regarded as one community.

The term "*Millat*" has a different connotation. It applies only to the community of faith (*Iman*) and canonical law (*Sharia*). It applies to every religious community whatever the common religion.

Accordingly it follows that Islam not only does not raise any obstruction to the formation of a united nationality with non-Muslims, it positively encourages it. Other considerations lend strong support to this consummation. The Hindus and Muslims are mostly descendants from the same race. Their residence in the same country for centuries together has moulded their common attitudes and ways of living. They speak common languages and share common historical traditions. They built together a common culture—literature, fine arts and music, while retaining their individual faith and personal law. They cooperate in numerous walks of life in villages and towns, in economic affairs, in schools and colleges, in district boards, municipalities, and provincial legislatures.

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[17] Madni, Husain Ahmad, *Mutahadda Qaumiyat aur Islam* (Urdu), published the Nazim Majlisi Qasim al Maarif, Deoband, U.P.

In short, this common nationality may be defined in the following words:

"By united nationality I mean the same type of united nationality which was founded by the Prophet, for whom be praise and on whom be peace, among the people of Medina. That is, I desire that the inhabitants of India—whatever their religion, ought in their capacity as Indians and residents of one country to become one nation...No one should obstruct the other in any religious matter. On the other hand, all the peoples inhabiting India ought to be free in the profession of their religious beliefs, ideals and worship. They should be free in following their religious customs, ritual and precepts, and in so far as their religion permitted in the propagation of their religion in a peaceful manner."[18]

To Iqbal's censorious verses his reply is

ترسم نه رسی کعبه تو اے اعرابی - کیں راہ که تو می روی انگلستان است

(O wanderer in the Arabian desert, I am afraid thou shalt not reach the holy place of Kaaba, for the road along which thou travelest leads to England.)

So far as Abul Ala Maududi was concerned, Husain Ahmad completely repudiated his religious views, which he considered were opposed to the orthodox Sunni doctrine and were in the same class as the heretical opinions of the Kharajis and others. Maududi's contention that the Muslims could only live in an exclusive society and could not share political authority with non-Muslims was utterly wrong and quite unacceptable.

On the constitution of a free and undivided India he held quite definite views. They may be summarized under the following heads:

(1) The Indian State shall be a republic, and its President shall be chosen by election. He will exercise the supreme executive authority.

(2) In the Central government, the Muslims will be in a minority, but their religious, political and economic rights will be protected. The Centre will deal with a limited number of subjects, viz., defence, foreign affairs, communications, transport and finance. The remaining subjects will be provincial. The religious affairs will be dealt with by the provincial governments.

(3) Education will be a provincial subject.

(4) Muslim canonical law (*Shariat*) or Muslim criminal law will not be enforced.

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[18] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

(5) The organisation of government will be on the basis of partnership of various communities.[19]

Husain Ahmad recognised that this partnership and covenant of unity imposed certain obligations upon the Muslim community. His words are:

"He (the Muslim) will be bound in duty to carry out any term of the agreement which he has made with the non-Muslim, which may require that he should not support and assist the universal Muslim brotherhood in any matter, and he will be obliged to withhold his help to the brotherhood if so provided in the terms of the agreement."[20]

Husain Ahmad judged the politics of the Muslim League in the light of his own principles and found them harmful not only for India as a whole, but also for the Muslims of India and the world.

He traced the history of the League which came into existence in 1906 at the instance of British officials, who used Archbold, the Principal of the M.A.O. College, Aligarh, as their intermediary. The sponsors of the League were the same people who had organised the Simla deputation of 1906 which, in the words of Maulana Muhammad Ali, was "a command performance". This group consisted of the upper class Muslims—men of wealth, landholders, seekers of government favours—services, titles, etc. There were few among them who could be described as popular leaders or public workers. For the first five years the annual conferences of the League were occasions largely for demonstrations of loyalty, denunciation of political agitation and affirmation of support to government.

Then a change came because the attitude of Government altered towards the Muslims. The Balkan Wars and the First World War caused widespread resentment among the Muslims and the League gravitated towards the Congress. In 1918 the Ulama joined it in large numbers. But the approval of the non-cooperation movement by the Congress at the session of 1920 in Nagpur frightened the League leaders.

In 1921, the League began to drift away from nationalist politics and embarked upon policies of opposition to the Congress, and promotion of communal interests.

According to Husain Ahmad, the career of the League from this time onwards was one of increasing disruption and destruction. The League stoked the fires of communal hatred, instigated violence, propounded the philosophy of vengeance, commended the example of Chengiz Khan and Hulaku, proclaimed direct action for acquisition of political rights, denounced the Congress governments and threatened war.

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[19] Madni, Husain Amhmad, *Maktubat*, 1st volume, letter No. 132, p. 115 ff.

[20] Madni, Husain Ahmad, *Mutahadda Qaumiyat aur Islam*, p. 65.

He rejected the League's two-nation theory and predicted the harmful effects which were likely to ensue from it both in internal and external affairs if India was divided. He wrote that the formation of two separate states would do the greatest harm to the Muslims, "their unity will vanish, in the provinces where they are in a minority, their political and economic status will be destroyed and in their majority provinces their central government will become involved in insoluble internal and external difficulties,...the government unable to sustain its position will be obliged to seek the assistance of some other power, with the result that the equilibrium of economy will be transferred into the hands of foreign governments and capitalists. Besides this government because of paucity of resources and aggravation of expenditure will not be able to discharge properly its defence responsibilities, and will have to tie its defence with the defence arrangements of the governments of the United Kingdom, and entrust the reins of its political future in their hands."[21]

"In external affairs an independent Muslim state will have to face even worse troubles. The mutual religious bigotry of India and Pakistan will give an opportunity to Britain for taking the fullest advantage, and in this manner in spite of the termination of British dominion in India its power will be established again."[22]

"Moreover, the partition of India will reduce the power of both countries, and therefore diminish their ability to resist the intervention of foreign nations. Again, these two separate states will be less capable of giving assistance and aid to the Muslim countries of Asia, than a united India. They will find it difficult to obtain any influence in international affairs."[23]

He examined with due care the nature of the fears and apprehensions which the League had been assiduously cultivating among the Mussalmans, and showed how they were based on imaginary forebodings and exaggerated assumptions. He showed that an analysis of the constitutional arrangements on which the Congress leaders had come to an agreement with the Ulama regarding the government of independent India would convince any reasonable person that the religious, cultural and political interests of the Muslims were fully safeguarded by them. In his opinion "in comparison with the certain losses entailed in the formation of Pakistan the dangers expected to befall the minority in case of the formation of the Indian Union were wholly unreal."[24]

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[21] Madni, Husain Ahmad, *Maktubat*, Vol. II; pp. 121-122.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

[23] *Ibid.*

Unfortunately the counsels of reason failed to stem the rising tide of passion and prejudice.

The Deoband Ulama who played a prominent part in the struggle for independence instituted the *Jamiatul Ulama* which was organised to formulate the opinion of the leading Muslim scholars in India on religious and political matters. Mahmud al Hasan was its first president and his address at the Conference held in Delhi in 1920 indicated the lines of its programme and the objectives of its activities.

In fact his was a stirring appeal from a dying, battle-scarred, old warrior to his colleagues to continue the good fight and not to rest till victory was won.

The sacrifices which the leaders of the Deoband School and the *Jamiat* made in the cause of freedom form a glorious chapter in the history of the freedom movement. Their intense devotion to the cause is manifest in their daily lives; there was no sacrifice which they did not or were not prepared to offer—financial or otherwise. They chose to spend the entire span of their life from boyhood to death eking out existence on a miserable pittance, stinted over creature comforts and on many occasions were obliged to put up with semi-starvation. They spent years in exile—voluntary or otherwise, or in British prisons —abused, maltreated, denied ordinary conveniences of life, and put on the poorest prison rations.

Mahmud al Hasan, Husain Ahmad Madni, Obaidullah Sindhi, Abul Kalam Azad and many other Ulama suffered uncomplainingly the hardships and deprivations which were heaped upon them and which they welcomed as an offering in the service of the country, man and God.

A survey of the march of Muslim thought in this period reveals a number of significant conclusions. The viceroyalty of Curzon marks a sharp turning point in Indian politics, with the result that firstly the old terror of alien authority gives place to questioning and defiance. The sentiments of thankfulness and loyaltv begin to evanesce and a sense of bitterness and humiliation and a longing for release from imperialist domination sweeps into the Indian mind.

In the second place the Muslim community with whose feelings the Government had made play by first placating them by the Partition of Bengal and then annoying them by revising the Partition was assailed with uncertainty and obliged to a searching of heart. This and the world events involving the fate of the Ottoman Empire rudely shook the foundations of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's policy which for half a century had kept the community bogged down in the deadening eddies of fear and hope created by the rulers. Stirrings of conscience began when the fresh winds of self-respect and self-assertion started blowing.

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[24] *Ibid.*

Thirdly, there rapidly spread political consciousness among wide circles of the community and with it a realisation that India's freedom was essential for the security of India and in the interest of the Muslims, and that it could be achieved only through Hindu-Muslim unity.

Fourthly, two divergent schools of thought emerged concerning the nature of national unity. The Hindu majority thought of national unity in terms of a consensus of individuals forming a unitary homogeneous society. On the other hand, the Muslim minority's view was that this unity would be a federation of communal groups—religious and regional, each possessing its own religious and cultural identity.

It followed from this, fifthly, that the majority stood for a more or less unitary society and state. It was willing to make concessions to the groups in order to safeguard the religious and cultural rights of the minorities, but it considered special treatment by conceding special rights and privileges, would impinge upon the principles of democratic equality of all citizens and homogeneity of the nation.

Sixthly, while all Muslim parties were agreed that it was necessary to recognise the separate entity of the Muslims and to guarantee the minority rights—political, religious, cultural, in the instrument of the Constitution, the Muslim League came to hold the opinion that no guarantee of rights would be really enforceable in a united Indian state where the Hindus would be a majority, and therefore, the only solution of the minority problem was a partition of India into independent sovereign states.

On the contrary, the Muslim organisations like the Jamiatul Ulama opposed the division of the country, which in their opinion was harmful for India and more so for the Muslims themselves.

Ultimately the Muslim League won. Its success was due to three factors. Firstly, wealth and influence were on its side, the rich Muslims —landed proprietors, princely families, big businessmen and higher professionals, were to a large extent supporters of the League. Secondly, the leaders of the majority community either failed to guage properly the intensity of Muslim fears, or to understand the complexity of the minority problem. They were inclined to view Indian problems in the context of their knowledge and experience of the British model —a culturally homogenous and a politically unitary society. Unluckily the Muslim League did not relish the concept of minority status and pitched its claims on the basis of equality with the majority, which alarmed the conservatives among the Hindus.

But the most important factor which led to the partition of the country was the attitude of the ruling class. The Government gave every encouragement to the separatist tendencies, by extending its favour and patronage to the anti-Congress Muslim leaders and by propaganda accentuating the fears of the Muslims and emphasizing their differences with the Hindus. In this propaganda, officials, non-officials, and the Anglo-Indian Press played an important role.

VI. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

Among the ranks of Muslim thinkers opposed to the school of Iqbal and Maududi—who claimed that an unbridgeable gulf separated the Hindus from the Muslims, there were many eminent scholars belonging to both traditional and modern schools of thought who believed in and advocated the unity of the two communities. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was the most outstanding among them. He was unparalleled among the contemporaries for his immense erudition in the Islamic sciences. In the knowledge of *Quran, Hadith* (the sayings of the Prophet), *Fiqh* (canonical law), *Kalam* (theological philosophy), History, Biography, he had no equal. He had an amazing mastery of Arabic, Persian and Urdu languages and literatures. In addition to oriental studies he had acquired a competent knowledge of European history and thought especially bearing on religion.

Over and above the qualities of intellect—keenness, perspicacity, vigour, memory, which make for profundity in scholarship, he was gifted with an original and creative genius in writing and speech. His command over Urdu prose was extraordinary. He could be witty, charming and refined, or subtly humorous, bitterly satirical or compulsively exhortatory. He could overwhelm a breathless and dazed reader or listener with the terrific avalanche of his illimitably rich vocabulary. It is, however, possible to find fault with his turgid style, his fondness for unfamiliar Arabic words, phrases and idioms and occasionally his artificial diction.

He possessed a striking personality. He was aristocratic in make-up, aloof, proud and dignified, without personal ambition and careless of public applause. He was indifferent to power and wealth, he shrank from the madding crowd, but he bore no malice or ill will to any one. He was forgiving. Neither praise and adulation nor abuse and insult could move him. In politics he was above factionalism and partisanship. He desired accommodation, concord and compromise. Nevertheless he had an iron will and a resolution which nothing could shake. He was widely respected and trusted. He enjoyed the confidence of all parties and groups irrespective of their community or ideology, in spite of the fact that in the later stages of his career a large section of Muslims disagreed with his politics. He belonged to that select group of high-minded Indians who did not seek prominence and popularity but who were sought out by others and who had leadership thrust upon them. Azad was a self-made and self-educated man, who had grown up in the traditions of an old style theological family atmosphere, but who worked shoulder to shoulder with the most advanced modern-minded Indian leaders and made a contribution to the emergence of a free and progressive India.

Abul Kalam Ghulam Muhiyuddin Ahmad whose pen-name was Azad was born in Mecca in 1888. His Indian father was descended from an eminent family of theologians and his Arab mother belonged to a highly esteemed family of scholars. Arabic was his mother tongue and piety and learning his heritage from the parents. The child was precocious and possessed of an independent and critical mind. He completed the traditional course of studies (*Dars-i-Nizamiah*) by the age of 15 in one-third of the time taken ordinarily.

At the age of twelve he had begun contributing articles to Indian journals and assisting in the editing of papers. At sixteen he brought out his own paper *Lisan al Sidq* and such great scholars as Shibli and Hali marvelled at the maturity of his scholarship.

When he was barely fourteen he began to be assailed by doubts in the traditional faith. The crisis was induced by his father's harsh views concerning the Wahhabis. It was speeded by the study of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's writings. He had great reverence for his learned father, but his furious hostility towards Wahhabi heterodoxy and unreasonable intolerance towards those with whom he did not agree, hurt him. An extraordinary ambivalent attitude of love and hate developed in him. Sympathy for Wahhabis and Sir Syed's rationalism combined to shatter the shackles of orthodoxy. He repudiated conformity (*Taqlid*) and accepted innovation (*Tajdid*). The next step was a critical examination of dogma and doctrine and their rejection. Then his mind was enveloped with doubts and he began to question the validity of religion itself. This led to the rejection of faith and denial of God. For some years he wandered in this dark valley of scepticism and infidelity bearing the burden of unrelieved mental anguish and spiritial pain, a rebel against his father and his family traditions.

But at last a day came when he emerged triumphant over this spiritual struggle and inner uncertainty. His faith was renewed and confirmed never to be shaken again by trials or tribulations. But the experience made him a different man. He reached the stage "where noth. ing is acceptable except abundance of pain, dedication of heart, and renunciation and consecration of life."[25]

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[25] Azad, A. K., *Tadhkira*, compiled by Fazl al Din Ahmad Shirazi (1919) p. 306.

His conversion had a two-fold effect. In the first place, his faith in the truth of Islam was no longer based only on intellectual grounds which are never secure, but on an emotional transformation which had roots in the deepest recesses of the soul. Secondly, he gained confidence in the new found independence. His broad-mindedness on doctrinal matters and his understanding and respect for other religions increased.

On the death of his father in 1908 Azad undertook a journey to Islamic countries. He travelled through Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Turkey. He found the atmosphere surcharged with new ideas and stirring movements. The teachings of Jamal al Din Afghani (died in 1897) had awakened in the Muslim world aspirations for freedom, progress and revival of religion. In Iraq he met the revolutionaries of Iran who were fighting against Qajar autocracy for establishing constitutional government (*mashruta*). In Egypt he came into contact with the disciples of Afghani Shaikh Muhammad Abduh and Saeed Pasha, as also the supporters of Mustafa Kamal Pasha. He saw the Young Turks in Constantinople.

He returned to India filled with the revolutionary ideas which pervaded the Muslim world. Before he left he had already abandoned blind acceptance of orthodoxy exemplified in the views of his learned father. But his mind was mainly occupied with religion and literature.

Abroad his mind's native bent towards freedom acquired a new dimension. He realized that freedom could not be limited to just one aspect of man's life, but that it had application to the totality of human activity. It was not enough to free Islam from the shackles of its medieval interpretations and to present its teachings in its pristine purity; it was equally important to emancipate the Muslims from their cultural and political subjection to the West. In his statement in the Calcutta Trial Court in January 1922 he asserted:

"The teachings of Islam are presented in the Book. They do not consider lawful in any circumstances that Muslims may continue to live after the loss of their independence. The Muslims should either destroy themselves or live in freedom. There is no third alternative in Islam."[26]

He came also to the conclusion that the independence of the four hundred million Muslims of the world was interlinked with the independence of India. He declared, "the real solution of the problem of Khilafat is dependent upon the independence of India."[27] But then the independence of India could not be achieved without effecting Hindu-Muslim unity. Presiding over the session of the Khilafat Conference at Agra in 1921, he said: "The seven crore Muslims of India should so combine with their twenty crore Hindu brethren of India that the two together should form one people and one nation".[28]

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[26] Azad, A. K., *Qaul-i-Faisal*, published by Chaman Book Depot, Urdu Bazar, Delhi, p. 103.

[27] Azad, A. K., *Taza Mazamin.*, compiled by M. Mushtaq Ahmad, Meerut, p. 12.

The problem was how to convey to his countrymen these convictions so that they might be inspired in their life and conduct to become good soldiers in the fight for freedom. The pulpit and the platform had been at his disposal since the early days of youth and he had already gained much experience of journalism. After studying the situation he decided to bring out a weekly journal in Urdu to propagate his ideas.

The times were ripe for such a venture. The Muslim mind was greatly perturbed at the happenings in Muslim World. In 1911 Italy had declared war and conquered the province of Tripoli in Northern Africa. The Balkan states excited by European powers were preparing for the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. Morocco had been forced to accept French domination. The Russians had created the incident of Mashed and threatened Iran. The Triple Entente comprising England, France and Russia was eager to liquidate "the sick man of Europe" who had thrown in his lot with the Triple Alliance of the Central European powers.

Its global interests involved Britain in policies which went against the Muslim states in northern Africa and the Middle East. The trend affected British attitude towards Indian Muslims. The revision of the Bengal partition in 1911 was a symptom.

The general discontent in India which the Morley-Minto Reforms did not allay, combined with Muslim resentment produced an explosive situation. At this moment Azad started the weekly *Al-Hilal*. It was like a volcanic eruption which throws up tongues of fire in the sky and covers the surrounding terrain with molten lava. It shocked the depressed Muslims who were bemoaning their fate, out of their passivity into resolute men with a will to act. It also gave a rude blow to the complacency of those who relied upon the goodwill of the rulers for favour. It gave a resounding call for Hindu-Muslim unity.

Al-Hilal was regarded by Government as a propagator of dangerous views, especially concerning the war. Its security deposit was forfeited and in 1914 it had to cease publication. In its place a new weekly was issued under the name of *al-Balagh*. Its life too was short. In 1916 Government ordered Azad to leave Bengal and interned him at Ranchi, from where he was released after the war in 1920.

By now a series of occurrences had brought on a new crisis. The country was seething with indignation and anger and all kinds of wild and violent actions were bruited about. Gandhiji who had tried with success non-cooperation as an instrument of peaceful political warfare in South Africa, suggested at a conference of the Muslim leaders its adoption as a means to rectify the wrongs done by the British government. Azad supported him and the programme of non-cooperation was adopted. Later the Indian National Congress confirmed the decision.

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[28] Azad, A. K., *Presidential Address*, Agra, published by M. Mushtaq Ahmad, Meerut, p. 14.

The life of Azad now became a part of the struggle for independence. He emerged as one of the chief architects of independence and it is necessary to analyse his contribution to the growth and success of the movement.

In order to understand the full impact of Azad's personality and thought upon the struggle for independence it is desirable to keep in mind the nature of the intellectual and political encounter between the West and India in the early nineteenth century. The Indian thinkers dazed by the triumphant march of British conquest had attributed their failure in resisting the western onslaught to religious and social decadence of their society and had naturally set about to put their house in order.

In the nineteenth century, a number of reformers had arisen who endeavoured to purify religion, to reawaken religious zeal and to remove social abuses. The moral uplift of society and advance towards freedom appeared to them dependent upon strengthening men's faith.

Apart from this, there was another consideration for laying emphasis upon religion. Disunity had been the bane of India's politics in the past. From the earliest period of history, foreigners had taken advantage of the differences among India's potentates to impose their dominion. In ending these fissiparous tendencies religion could be a powerful means. Some of the dividing factors had disappeared. The geographical barriers which prevented peoples of the different regions to come together had been largely overcome by the development of means of communication and transport. The influence of a uniform system of administration had promoted the sense of unity. The middle class had developed similar outlook conditioned by western ways and educated according to western methods and interests. The political leaders had felt the need of strengthening their movement by bringing together like-minded people all over India. They fulfilled the need by founding the Indian National Congress. But before long they realized that the support of the mass of their countrymen was a *sine qua non* for success. Religion being their chief ideological link with the masses, their interest in national affairs could be evoked only through religion.

Thus both for securing social and moral reform as well as for removing the political indifference and inertia of the masses resort to religion was almost inevitable. There was, however, a section of the educated—the

Indian graduates of the Universities of India and abroad, who had studied the scientific theories of philosophers like Bentham, Mill, Herbert Spencer, Huxley and the Rationalist thinkers and had developed a secular outlook, but their influence was limited. For, a majority of their countrymen were illiterate and were steeped in medieval ideas. Also in their own group the education of women had made little advance. Therefore, their radical views remained confined to a comparatively small circle. Nevertheless, they could not be ignored.

It is not surprising, therefore, that a number of Indian political leaders in the beginning of the twentieth century were profoundly concerned with religion. Tilak, Bipin Chandar Pal, Aurobindo Ghosh, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Lajpat Rai and other nationalist leaders were deeply religious men. Mrs. Annie Besant who founded the Theosophical Society and exercised much influence on Hindu youth led the Home Rule movement in the middle twenties.

The factors which were responsible for Hindu reform and Hindu unity operated in the Muslim community also. Under their impulse a number of reform movements had arisen among the Muslims in the nineteenth century. The consequences were similar to those in the Hindu community. Aligarh was the centre of the educated Muslims and Deoband attracted traditionally educated scholars.

In the twentieth century Iqbal provided the philosophical justification for the faith of the westernized Muslim youth and his ideas gained greatly in popularity and effectiveness as he enshrined his vision of Islam in verse of moving quality. The philosopher poet inspired theologians like Maududi whose appeal was directed to the scholars of the old school. Their writings accentuated Muslim separatism and laid stress on a nationalism based on religion.

Abul Kalam Azad led a massive attack upon the citadels of sycophancy and exclusiveness of the Muslim leaders. According to him the attitude of the first implied a rank denial of Islam, and that of the second, a woeful misunderstanding of the teachings of the *Quran*.

The first needed no elaborate argument to demolish their case. Once the nature of their pettifogging policy was exposed no self-respecting individual would support it.

Upon the second he brought to bear the whole weight of his vast learning and the amazing resources of his literary expression to bring home to them the mistakes of their interpretation.

Azad firmly believed with Iqbal that the *Quran* was the final revelation of God to man and that the life of the Prophet Muhammad was the highest ideal for human conduct. But he held that a good many of the learned expositors of the *Quran* in the past like Raza and others had been unfortunately led astray by their peculiar personal notions and biases. Regarding the recent interpretations his criticism is:

"Some writers of India and Egypt who claim independence of thought have attempted to prove that the principles of modern knowledge and the progressive ideas of the present age could be validated from the *Quran* and the modern scientific theories could be deduced from it. They seem to think as if the *Quran* was sent down in order to whisper into the ears of the people of the Prophet's times as secrets whatever discoveries Copernicus and Newton or Darwin and Wallace have made in subsequent years but without the help of the philosophical speculations of a revealed book. They believe that for centuries these discoveries remained uncomprehended till the commentators of the modern times appeared and explained what had been known to thinkers hundreds of years earlier. This kind of interpretation is surely interpretation based on opinion (*Rai*)."

The rules which he followed were (1) to assign to the words of the *Quran* the meaning which they had in the times when it was revealed, and refrain from reading into these words meaning or connotation which they acquired in subsequent ages; (2) to remember that the teachings of the *Quran* were addressed to the Arabs of Mecca and Medina who were a simple and unsophisticated people with little scientific or philosophical training, and, whose intellectual horizon was limited by what they knew about their own traditions and what they had heard from their immediate neighbours—the Jews, the Christians and the Sabeans.

Read in the light of these considerations the *Quran* becomes easy to understand. It is a book which supplies guidance to man, both in his individual and collective capacity for all stages and aspects of life. Its teaching may be divided into two parts—religion and law. So far as religion is concerned it insists only upon belief (*Iman*) and right action (*amal-i-Salih*). Belief implies faith in the unity of God and in the uniqueness of His essence and attributes. It forbids association with God of any supernatural or territorial being or assimilation of His attributes with those of any other being.

The *Quran* assures us that this religion is not new. God revealed it in earlier times to peoples of other countries through prophets sent to them. Hence this religion is eternal and immutable. It was declared to every people through the messengers of God as stated in many verses of the *Quran*.[29] This faith is common to all the people of the world, for truth is one and ever abiding. The need for revealing it again through Muhammad arose because the people to whom it was previously revealed had corrupted it. They had deviated from the truth of the oneness of God—a truth which must be followed in thought, word and deed, and not merely repeated by word of mouth

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[29] *Quran*, 24:35, 7-13, 46:10, 31-16.

Besides, this faith (*Din*), the *Quran* lays down the law (*Shara*), which is the external form of the faith, and which regulates man's conduct and prescribes the standards of action. But the law is relative to time and place. It varies according to the social circumstances and the mental capability of a people. In the matter of ritual and worship, therefore, people follow different ways and the *Quran* recommends that there ought to be no ground for dispute regarding such matters. The *Quran* expressly says that God has made for every group or nation a different law and standard. If God wished He could have made one law for all.

Azad says: "The principle underlying faith in God (*Din-i-Ilahi*) is brotherhood and unity of the human race, not difference and hatred. All the prophets of God who appeared on earth gave the same teaching, *viz.*, all human beings are one people, and the Supporter of all of them is one God"[30]. According to him, "God wishes to establish this truth in the mind of every one that differences in thought and action are national characteristics of the human race. These differences are present in every aspect of life including religion. It is not, therefore, proper to consider these differences as the yardstick for truth and falsehood"[31]

"The way of belief is to accept the truth of all the prophets and not to deny any one of them. The way of disbelief is to deny any one or all of them"[32]

In conversation with Malihabadi Azad stated: "*Hadith* cannot be the source of law for the whole of human society. The *Quran* is responsible for universal guidance, but the *Quran* contains only a limited number of laws. The reason is that no code of laws can apply to the entire world because of differences in times and conditions. Nor can such a code be useful. This explains why the authority to suspend the operation of the authoritative laws of the *Quran* has been entrusted to the *Iman* of the Muslims", for example *Ahl-i-Hadith* amended the law of divorce and prohibited the severance of the hand of a thief".[33] This is a remarkably liberal statement.

Having made it clear that the faith (*Din*) is universal and eternal, he draws some important conclusions from the principle. In the first place, this faith requires a living realisation of the providence and power of God, the recognition that God is one and only master and sovereign. Secondly, such a faith expels all fear of worldly authority. A Muslim who surrenders his will to God and none other, cannot live as a slave.

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[30] Azad, A. K., *Tarzuman al Quran*, Vol. I., p. 400.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 375.

[32] *Quran* (150-3, 4).

[33] Malihabadi, A. R., *Dhikr-i-Azad*, p. 233.

He has only one alternative: freedom or death. Thirdly, the faith of a Muslim is a covenant which he has made with God and which in all circumstances is binding on him. He is the chosen of God who is gifted with the best of religions brought down by the best and the last of prophets. He is the salt of the earth, and an exception in righteousness. He has been selected to spread love and unity among mankind and not to promote strife and violence.

These then are the demands of religion—unity and freedom. But Muslims were everywhere in chains and all over the world the deadly fingers of the West were on their throat strangling it to death. The freedom of four hundred million Muslims of Asia and Africa was at stake. Azad believed that the emancipation of the Muslims was unrealisable without the independence of India. But the independence of India could not be achieved without the unity of the Hindus and Muslims of India.

Iqbal and Maududi and their like were proclaiming that neither the social nor the political unity of the two was possible or desirable, for such a unity spelt the annihilation of the Muslims and the destruction of their faith, culture and ways of life. Moreover, Islam forbade the solidarity of believer and non-believer as one nation.

The reply of Azad to this argument was unequivocal and supported by the holy Book of Islam and the examples set by the Prophet. According to Azad, the *Quran* teaches that all religions are in essence identical however much they may have drifted from their original purity. The Muslims are required to show equal reverence to all the prophets and the books that came before the advent of Muhammad and the *Quran*. Islam brings peace to the world and not the sword. It expressly prohibits the use of force in propagating religion and does not approve disrespect to the places of worship of the non-Muslims[34] or the renunciation of their ritual and worship.

The *Quran* has repeated again and again that the non-Muslims who refrain from hostility and war against the Muslims, who do not drive them out of their homes and who show the spirit of cooperation ought to be treated on the basis of reciprocity as friends. In Islam politics is subordinate to religion. All these principles are inducements to the national integration of Muslims and non-Muslims.

Azad was so profoundly convinced that Islam was sent down upon earth for establishing equality and unity of men, freedom and peace, that he refrained from gloating over the wars and conquests by which the Islamic empires were built up. He seemed not to approve of the autocratic ways of the Muslim rulers and their imitation of the manners of the Pharaohs of Egypt, the Kaisers (Ceasor) of Rome and

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Quran, 114:2.

the Khusroes of Iran. If he tells the stories of the battles and sieges of the early days of Islam, it is just to illustrate the compassion and humanity with which they conducted themselves as compared with the behaviour in similar situation of the Europeans.

So far as the practice of the Prophet is concerned Azad pointed out that when the Muslim community of Medina was threatened by the non-Muslim tribes of Mecca, Muhammad entered into a solemn contract with the non-Muslim tribes in the neighbourhood of Medina in these terms:

"With the tribes which dwell in the neighbourhood of Medina we make peace, we make an agreement that all of us desire to join together to form a united nation (*Ummat-i-Wahida*)"[35].

Such was the view of Azad concerning the religious aspect of the national problem. In support of this conclusion he wrote an article on Islam and Nationalism[36] which is based on sociological arguments. He discusses in it the evolutionary process of social development. He thinks that society passes through three main stages in its evolution. In the first stage society is organised on the basis of kinship from maternalistic family to paternalistic family, clan and tribe. The second stage begins with territory taking the place of kinship uniting the group to the estate, to the region and to the nation. The third stage is that of universalism-continentalism, religious ecumenicalism or Islam and humanity.

The evolution of society before it reaches the stage of religious universalism and humanism must pass through the stage of nationalism. Thus both religion and science indicate the necessity and desirability of nationalism—not of an aggressive type, for protecting the individual in the pursuit of welfare both moral and material.

In consequence Hindu-Muslim unity became an ineradicable conviction and a deep set passion with him. In 1912 when he plunged into politics with the issue of his weekly *Al-Hilal,* one of the main planks in his programme was Hindu-Muslim unity. He declared: "I am a Muslim and I feel proud of the fact that I have inherited the glorious traditions extending over 1300 years. I am not prepared to allow its least part to be lost...As a Muslim I live in its religious and cultural orbit in which I hold a special place. I am not prepared to permit anyone to interfere with it.

"With all these sentiments I possess another sentiment, which has been produced by the realities of my life. The spirit of Islam does not prohibit it. On the other hand, it directs me on this way. I feel proud that I am an Indian. I am a part of the indivisibly united nationality of India. I am an important element in this united nationality. Without me the temple of its greatness remains incomplete. I am an essential factor in its structure, a claim which I can under no circumstances abandon"[37]

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[35] Malihabadi, Abdul Razzaq, *Dhikr-i-Azad*, p. 141.

Presidential Address at the Provincial Khilafat Conference, Agra, 1921.

[36] Azad, A. K., *Islam and Nationalism*, Al Balagh Agencies, Lahore, 1929

In another passage in the same pamphlet he draws attention to the common history of Hindus and Muslims spreading over 1100 years, during which every nook and corner of the peoples' life was affected by mutual give and take—language, poetry, etiquette, manners, tastes, clothing, custom, daily life and others. He rightly insists "this common-heritage is the rich possession of our united nationality. We cannot surrender this wealth in order to return to the age which preceded this life partnership. If there are amongst us Hindu minds which desire to revive the Hindu ways existing a thousand years ago, then they should know that they are seeing a dream which will never be fulfilled. In the same way if there exist Muslim minds which want to revivify the culture and social life which a thousand years ago they brought from Iran and Central Asia, then I tell them that the sooner they awaken from this dream the better, because this notion is wholly unnatural and such thoughts cannot grow in the soil of reality "[38].

He was never tired of proclaiming that for the sake of India's freedom, for the sake of fulfilling the highest ideals of duty based on truth and right, it was necessary for the Hindus and Muslims to become one and united. In fact he went so far in his emphasis on unity as to assert: "If an angel were to descend from beyond the clouds in the heavens and were to stand on the top of the Qutub Minar of Delhi and proclaim that India could attain independence (Swaraj) in 24 hours provided India abandons Hindu-Muslim unity, then in that case I will surrender this demand for Swaraj, but I will not give up unity, for if there is delay in the advent of Swaraj the loss will be that of India only, but if our unity is destroyed then it will be the loss of the entire human race."[39]

For the achievement of Hindu-Muslim unity he appealed to both the communities, but he laid a special charge upon the Muslims for cultivating a consciousness of nationalism and playing a leading role in the struggle for freedom. According to him it was the religious duty of the Muslims to wage by all means at their disposal a war against tyrants and enemies of Islam (*Tarfi Maharib*) such as the British.

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[37] Azad, A.K., *Musalman aur Congress* (Urdu), pp. 26-27

[38] *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

[39] Zaidi, A.J., *Anwari-i-Abul Kalam* (Srinagar, 1959).

Dr. M.U. Qadiri's article on "Contribution of Azad in the renaissance of Indian Culture"

He was prepared for every sacrifice to rid the country of the British rule. He said: "Musalman will abandon the cities in which he dwells, will move into the forests, make peace with serpents and scorpions but he shall not make peace with the British Government."[40]

He deeply deplored the politics of the Aligarh School and those of the Muslim League in its initial stages. He poured ridicule on their conduct in keeping aloof from politics and their refusal to cooperate with the Indian National Congress on the grounds that they were backward in education and a minority in numbers which would be overwhelmed in any democratic form of government. They were worried about the security of their rights in case the British dominion disappeared. They saw dangers on all sides—danger to their political status, danger to their belief and customs, danger to their culture, language, writing, danger to their whole life and even to their religion.

Azad berated them on their pusillanimity and exhorted them to follow the teachings of Islam in their conduct, drive off paralysing fears from their minds and rely only upon God who had given to those of the faith the promise of victory and dominion.

The political creed of Azad was freedom, unity and democracy. At the time when the Partition of Bengal had thrown the country into an unprecedented turmoil he was inclined to join the terrorists and to organise an armed rebellion against government, but later more sober counsels prevailed and he became convinced of the futility of violence. He adopted with enthusiasm the method and programme of non-violent non-cooperation, although he did not make it a religious principle. His opinion on the plan for Pakistan was:

"After considering all aspects of the scheme I have reached the conclusion that taken as a whole it is not only harmful for India alone, but is specially injurious for the Musalmans. The truth is that it will not solve so many problems as it will create... The scheme cannot by any means either benefit the Muslims or remove their doubts and fears"[41]

VII. OBAIDULLAH SINDHI

A very remarkable member of the Deoband school was Obaidullah Sindhi. He was born in 1871 in a Sikh family of Sialkot district distantly related to Mulraj, the famous Diwan of Multan. At the age of fifteen he became a convert to Islam and migrated to Sind. He started learning Arabic and the Islamic sciences and mysticism. For two years he remained a pupil of Mahmud al Hasan of Deoband who was then a teacher in the Muslim schools of Sind. Then he migrated to Deoband

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[40] Malihabadi, A.R., *op.cit.*, pp. 138-39.

[41] Zaidi, S.A., "Azad: the Architect of Unity and Freedom", in Zaidi, S.A., (ed.), *Anwari Abul Kalam* (Srinagar, 1959).

and from 1327 to 1331 A.H. he taught in the Deoband School. He was a close associate of his teacher Mahmud al Hasan, under whose advice he organised the *Jamiat-al-Ansar*. His extreme hostility toward the government was considered dangerous to the school interests and he was sent to Delhi to a newly established school *Nazaratul Maarif* under the joint patronage of Vaqarul Mulk of Aligarh and Mahmud al Hasan of Deoband. Hakim Ajmal Khan, Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari and Maulana Muhammad Ali were also associated with the School.

Two years later in 1915, Mahmud al Hasan in pursuance of his plan to remove the British from India sent Obaidullah to Kabul. Amir Habibullah Khan showed some interest in the plan and advised Obaidullah to cooperate with the Indian National Congress. A Congress Committee was organised in Kabul which was later affiliated to the Indian National Congress on the recommendation of Dr. Ansari. The Amir, however, did not wish to offend the British. He did not give much encouragement to Obaidullah or to the Indo-German Mission which visited Kabul at this time.

But Obaidullah and the Indian members of the Mission—Raja Mahendra Pratap and Barakatullah established a provisional government of India which sent missions to Russia, Turkey and Japan for soliciting their aid in liberating India. Efforts were made to raise troops and the Panjabi youngmen who had fled to Kabul were enrolled as officers of the revolutionary army.

At the same time in order to unify the Muslim states against Britain an organisation called *Hizb Allah* (the Party of God) was formed with headquarters at Medina under Mahmud al Hasan and with other centres at Kabul, Tehran and Constantinople. Schemes were set on foot to seize the military magazines in India, but the first attempt at Firozepur failed.

Again letters (probably three), known as "Silk letters" were issued over the signature of Raja Mahendra Pratap, the President of the Provisional Government, in which the plans of the organisation and its programme were explained. When, after the assassination of Habibullah, Amir Amanullah Khan came to the throne, the hopes of the liberators rose. In the short war between Amanullah and the British the members of the Indian Committee rendered service which was suitably acknowledged by the Afghan Government. Amir Amanullah declared he would complete the work Mahmud al Hasan had begun.

The situation in Kabul after the Afghan War, however, compelled Obaidullah to leave Afghanistan. He proceeded to Moscow and stayed there for about seven months. He utilized the opportunity to study the socialist system of Soviet Russia.

From Moscow, he moved on to Constantinople and Ankara where he spent the next three years—1923 to 1926. These were years of transformation of Turkey under the powerful leadership of Ataturk Mustafa Kamal Pasha. Obaidullah was a witness to three revolutions—one in Kabul, another in Russia a European country and the third among the Muslims of Turkey. The third revolution was for a deeply religious minded Indian Musalman a most disturbing experience.

In 1926 he proceeded from Constantinople by way of Italy and Switzerland to Hejaz which had by now passed under the rule of Ibn-i-Saud. He spent the next twelve years in Arabia in study and teaching, far from political controversies. He became acquainted with the new currents of thougnt which were agitating the then Arab world. During these years he read much and thought much, developed his own philosophy of life and religion.

In March 1939 he returned to India and landed at the port of Karachi. He brought with him a treasure of varied and stirring experiences, a deep conviction in the truth of Islam tempered with a bread and liberal understanding of its religious, social and political principles. He was nearing the seventeenth year of his age, and the vicissitudes of life and the battle of conflicting eastern and western thought had dug deep channels in his mind. It was not surprising that his keenness to propagate his ideology, which he was convinced could lead the Muslims and the Indians as a whole towards unity, freedom and prosperity, made him impatient, even irritable.

From 1939 till his death in 1944, incessantly and untiringly he continued to preach his gospel. Unfortunately he arrived in India too late. By 1939 the Muslim League had eatablished its hold over the community and the Ulama were fighting a losing battle. His advanced and unconventional views on religion and his domineering temper irked the orthodox and the conservatives and seriously undermined his influence. Nevertheless, both because of the part which he played in the early years of the struggle and of his strikingly modern outlook his ideas deserve attention.

For Obaidullah, Islam was the be all and end all of life. But his conception of Islam was not narrow nor exclusive. According to him Islam was synonymous with universal and cternal religion. It was the expression of the fundamental thought of humanity, the basic principle of all faiths, the manifestation of the nature of God. The conscience of men, the *Bhagawad Gita*, the Pentateuch and the Bible were all commentaries upon this religion. The *Quran*, the *Gita* and the *Bible* were equally true; their interpreters in subsequent years produced confusion and difference.

The aim of the *Quran* is the establishment of the coummunity of man, to discipline the individual to become a virtuous unit of society and to train society to become a worthy member of the human family. Righteousness of the individual, society and humanity is the goal of Islam. What unites man is, therefore, religion and what separates is its contrary.

Faith of all mankind is one, eternal and immutable. But laws differ. Each society under its peculiar conditions, peculiar geographical and historical environments, gives to itself its peculiar laws. They must change with the change of times. The institutions—political and economic, which existed in the times of the first four Caliphs cannot apply to modern times. Bigoted zeal in the maintenance of what is temporal and mutable and hatred of other religions is evil. The true believer in the unity of God and the sincere worshipper of the one Lord loves all men and serves all fellow-beings.

Like law, civilization is the product of peculiar conditions and ideas A civilization passes through periods of growth and decay. Then a revolution may occur and a renewal takes place. The histories of Iran, Rome, India and Arabia furnish instances of this universal process. The rise of Islam was a revolution in the affairs of the people of Arabia. The Islamic civilization has in its turn undergone several revolutions—under the righteous Caliphate, the Ummayyid Arabisizing state, the Abbasid Persianized empire, the Ottoman Caliphate, and the contemporary national democratic states. The rise of nationalities in the Islamic world in the present times is not in contravention of the principles of Islamic religion.

The teachings of the Prophet have two aspects—particular and universal—*Fiqh* (Regulations of Society) and *Din* (faith). The first deals with the special needs of a people in a particular period—their customs and manners and ways of living. The second regulates morals—the discipline and purification of mind, and prescribes the universal doctrines of faith—belief in one God, in reward and punishment for good or evil, and in right human relations.

How do these principles apply to the Indian situation?

The answer of Obaidullah is that historically the India of today is the product of the mingling of the two Aryan races which entered India —the first in the second milleninm B.C. and the second at the close of the first milleninm A.D. Two thousand five hundred years separate the immigration of the Vedic Aryans from the advent of the Moslemized Aryans, but the fact remains that the two though different in religion are one in race. Of this history Ashoka, Akbar and Aurangzeb are the milestones. Ashoka's devotion to Buddhism is similar to Akbar's endeavour to find a common religion (*Din-i-Ilahi*) on the common basis of ancient Indian philosophy and Islamic mysticism, i.e. absolute monism (***Wahdat al Wajud***). Aurangzeb sought to revive the waning religious consciousness of the Indian Muslims, on whom the independence of

India then depended, by propagating the philosophic theory of phenomenal monism (*Wahadat-al-Shuhud*). The two forms of monism, according to Shah Waliullah—the guide and preceptor of Obaidullah, were two sides of the same coin, and Aurangzeb was working towards an end similar to that of Akbar, namely, to find a common ideological basis for Indian culture.

Under the inspiration of Mahmud al Hasan, Obaidullah had made the independence of India his life's mission. He sacrificed much and risked much for its sake. In his early career he worked for a violent revolution, but later he joined the Congress and accepted the Gandhian creed of non-violent non-cooperation as a means but not as a principle. He remained faithful to this truth till the end.

He believed that the Congress alone was the truly representative political organisation of Indians and that all Indians should accept its lead. But he wanted the Congress to confine its activities to secular affairs only—political and economic and scrupulously refrain from giving a religious colour to its activities. He was unhappy that under Gandhiji's influence the Congress was inclining more and more towards his peculiar religious ideas and way of life. He saw that as a consequence, the Muslims in general were turning away from the Congress and the leaders who were popular during the Khilafat movement were losing their hold on Muslim mind. As a Muslim he believed, that the Congress was sufficiently alive to the needs and aspirations of the Muslim community. He was, therefore, a strong supporter of the political unity of India under the Congress umbrella, but the concept of one community, one language, one culture and one way of life was utterly repugnant to him.

He thought of India in terms of a federation of autonomous states and communities. He pointed out that in area, population, linguistic and racial multiplicity, India compared with Europe. But this did no mean that India should be balkanized or divided into fragments. The unity of India was essential. Without it the problems of the country could not be solved. This larger unity, however, must consist of the smaller units exercising rights of self-government, but strung together in indissoluble bonds.

In political and economic matters he advocated complete westernization. Republicanism, democracy, representative government, science, technology and industry were the products of European civilization and it was the height of folly to reject them.

The traditional system of Indian society was feudal and completely otiose. It had to be replaced by a modern system based on the equality and freedom of the individual. Neither the empire of Asoka nor the Islamic monarchy of Aurangzeb could now be revived.

But in the opinion of Obaidullah man was not merely an economic creature whose life was directed solely by material interests. He had moral and spiritual involvement. Religion is as necessary for his soul as food for his body. In India there are many religions. Fundamentally they are all one. All ought to be equally respected, for their underlying philosophy of monism—unity of being, ensures harmony of thought, concord of minds and real mutual sympathy. Islam does not wish to destroy nationalities, it wants to bind them together into one brotherhood.

VIII. AHRARS

In 1857 the leading family of the Ulama of Ludhiana threw in their lot with the revolutionaries. At Bahadur Shah's command they marched to Delhi fighting their way through British forces. Abdul Qadir, the head of the family and his sons showed indomitable courage during the operations of the siege. When Delhi fell they retired to the jungles of Patiala and evaded all attempts of the government to arrest them On the proclamation of general amnesty they decided to return to Ludhiana. Abdul Qadir died on the way, but his family was warmly welcomed by the people.

The sons resumed their ancestral profession of religious teaching. In 1885 when the Indian National Congress met they welcomed its formation. When two years later Sir Syed Ahmad Khan announced his opposition and advised the Muslims to abstain from participating in it, and then founded the Patriotic Association. Shah Muhammad son of Abdul Qadir issued a *fatwa* condemning the attitude of Sir Syed and declaring cooperation with the Hindus for political purposes lawful and desirable. The *fatwa* was signed by nearly one thousand Maulavis from all parts of India. It was printed under the title of *Nusrat-al-Abrar* (Victory of the Good) and distributed in the meeting of the Congress at Allahabad in December, 1888.

Ludhiana became a well-known centre of the liberal nationalist movement. In 1896 a weekly paper was issued which was succeeded by an English daily, the *Observer*. Its independent views attracted the wrath of Government and it ceased publication in 1919.

The Balkan Wars of 1912 followed by the World War in 1914 shocked the Muslims of India who were greatly worried about the future of the Caliphate. In 1919 their worst fears were aroused, for the Allies had occupied the Holy places in Arabia and Mesopotamia.

The Ulama of Ludhiana were greatly agitated and when Gandhiji offered to start the movement of non-cooperation for the rectification of the Khilafat wrong and the restitution of the Holy lands, Habibur Rahman, the grandson of Shah Muhammad, a youngman of twenty-seven years of age, joined the Congress. He never looked back. Till his death in Delhi in 1956 he remained true to his troth. He was a man of amazing courage and endurance. His devotion to principles was such as martyrs might envy. He never deviated from his beliefs and stood by them firm as a rock. Even loyalty to the Congress, unswerving faith in the leadership of Gandhiji and deep attachment to Jawaharlal Nehru could not deter him from differing from them, speaking to them frankly and warning them of the evil consequences of what he considered to be wrong decisions.

In 1929, on the advice of Abul Kalam Azad, he founded the association, *Majlis-e-Ahrar* (The Society of Freemen). Its aims and objects were :

(1) The complete independence of India ,

(2) In independent India freedom of religion, culture, civilization and education for all ;

(3) The autonomy of provinces with full authority in internal affairs, and the fixation of the powers of the central government by the agreement of the provinces ;

(4) The Central Government to be the federation of provincial states :

- (a) The Central Legislature to be constituted on the basis of equality of Hindus and Muslim representatives with 10 per cent seats for other communities ;
- (b) The bills affecting Muslim religion or culture to be withdrawn if two-thirds of Muslim members objected ;
- (c) A Supreme Court to be established with equal number of Hindu and Muslim judges ;
- (d) A department of Muslim charitable trusts to be set up ;
- (e) The army to be recruited from both communities ;
- (f) Central financial assistance to be given to backward provinces;
- (g) All weightage on any ground in legislatures and services to be ended ;
- (h) Non-interference of government in the culture, language, religion, education, places of worship, of all religious communities;
- (i) No interference with the personal law of the Muslims ;
- (j) The appointment of Muslim judges for trying cases which involved religious laws ;

(5) Unyielding opposition to the establishment of Pakistan.

The sacrifices which the Ahrars made, and the sufferings which they cheerfully bore in the cause of Indian independence constitute a shining chapter of Indian history.

A review of Muslim thought makes it abundantly clear that the strongest urge behind their thinking was the desire to preserve at any cost the identity of the community, its basic culture and religion. All schools of thought were agreed upon this. But there were profound differences between those who believed that their object could be achieved within a united free India through the agreement of the Hindus and Muslims. This group led by the Jamiatul Ulama carried the community with them and enjoyed the trust of the majority till 1936. Then by a sudden swoop the Muslim League forged ahead, seized the lead and within less than a decade achieved its aim. The idea of Pakistan which it had put forward in 1940 hesitatingly, and more in a bargaining spirit than as a serious demand, became a reality in 1947. How it happened will be explained in a subsequent chapter.

IX. Maulana Abul Ala Maududi

By the end of the nineteenth century the Muslim community in India, as pointed out above, was again in the grip of anxiety and fear. Earlier it had placed its trust in the government. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and his colleagues of Aligarh had allowed themselves to be persuaded to oppose the Indian National Congress and its claims for political rights - they were encouraged in this course by governmental favours culminating in the creation of the Muslim majority province of East Bengal.

Unfortunately, the violent reaction against the Partition, and the assumption of power by the Liberal Party in England aroused speculation regarding government's policy both in the matter of the demand of the Congress for a measure of constitutional advance and the larger issues concerning the Liberal foreign policy towards the Muslim community.

It was in this atmosphere of vague apprehensions that the Government initiated the twofold policy of rallying the Moderates among the Indian political leaders and of assuaging the perturbed feelings of the educated Muslims.

Morley, the Secretary of State for India, was known as a radical in British politics and enjoyed the respect and esteem of the liberal Indian politicians. He won Gokhale's confidence and through him secured the support of the Moderate wing of the Congress for his reforms.

Minto played a double role. On the one hand, he encouraged the Muslims who had waited on him in deputation under the leadership of the Aga Khan, and, on the other, he cajoled Morley out of his radicalism on the question of separate electorates on communal grounds : Morley's surrender gave the official imprimatur to the theory that the Muslims were "a nation within a nation". The Aga Khan admitted in his *Memoirs* : "Lord Minto's acceptance of our demands was the foundation of all future constitutional proposals made for India by successive British Governments, and its final inevitable consequence was the partition of India and the emergence of Pakistan."[42]

Thus Minto, the conservative, and Morley, the liberal, joined in laying the foundations of future Pakistan. They might differ in British politics, but they had the same views about India. Both believed that English political institutions or responsible government for "the nations" of India was just inconceivable.

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[42] Agakhan, *The Memoirs* p. 95.

By introducing separate electorates in the politics of India the British government committed the British solemnly and irrevocably to a course of action which led to the partition of India. The public avowal on the part of the Secretary of State for India that the inhabitants of India constituted "nations" and not "a nation" and the embodiment of this view in the Indian Constitution were bound to stimulate fissiparous tendencies and to invite advocates of separatism to intensify their efforts in propagating their views, for they were completely assured of the sympathy of Government.

Iqbal had set the ball rolling. Others followed his lead. Already a number of prominent persons in the community were groping towards a solution of their problems in order to safeguard the cultural individuality of Indian Islam. The Aga Khan in 1906 thought in terms of Muslim nationality, Chowdhry Afzal Haq raised the slogan of an Islamic state, Azad Subhani presented the concept of the divine Caliphate, Obaidullah Sindhi contemplated a state bounded by the Indus and the Jumuna rivers constituted according to the teachings of Shah Waliullah. There were others too who entertained similar views.

Among them Abul Ala Maududi, a traditionist theological scholar, is important. He had set much store by the Caliphate movement which began in the last years of the First World War. Its failure greatly upset him. He spent many years in anguished thought concerning the state of Islam, and then arrived at conclusions which in relation to Muslim politics were not substantially different from those of Iqbal. But in his approach to the problem, unlike Iqbal, he was wholly uninfluenced by western ideas. He took his stand on a severely rigid and literal interpretation of the *Quran* and *Hadith*. He condemned all those Muslim scholars who differed from him as perpetrators of the sin of *Shirk* (associating others with God), and heaped vials of wrath on their devoted heads in the conviction that they were weltering in sin, and would attract divine punishment on the day of judgment. He included among the sinners such eminent Ulama as Mahmud al Hasan and Ahmad Hasan Madni of Deoband and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

His writings, however, attracted and earned the appreciation of Iqbal who invited him to transfer his activities from Hyderabad to the Panjab. He settled at Pathankot in 1938 and established the organisation *Darul Islam*. Three years later, he founded the *Jamat-i-Islami* (Islamic Society) with the object of propagating the idea of *Hukumat-i-Ilahiya* (the sovereignty of God). Since the Partition of India he has been a stormy petrel in the politics of Pakistan and his Society has been a source of anxiety to India and Pakistan.

His Religion

In religion he was a literalist like Ibni Taimiya. He held that man needed an organic law for the right guidance of his inner and outer life—both individual and collective, which took into consideration all his essential needs and requirements and which rested upon universal and eternal principles. Such a religion ought to enable man to pass successfully through all present and future states of change and evolutionary cycles, retaining the spiritual values which are not subject to alteration or mutation.

Such a law cannot be based on science, observation and experience. It must transcend the limits of human reason. It must be sought, therefore, in the will and guidance of God, who has sent His messengers to various peoples in different ages, and lastly to the Arabs. God revealed to Muhammad the *Quran* which contains His divine commands and constitutes a perfect code for the regulation of human conduct. This divine code is above all human shortcomings and limitations, its wisdom is not defiled by human passions and desires, nor impaired by irrational discriminations and preferences. Its perfection is the proof of its divine inspiration. This code covers all departments of man's conduct and comprehends his entire activities, for the life of man is indivisible and cannot be compartmentalized.

It is incumbent upon every individual to implicitly obey the divine commands. Those who submit to God alone and do not submit to any other than Him, form the divinely chosen society of Muslims. God promised to the faithful that they would prevail on earth and rule mankind. According to Maududi, in a sense the entire universe lives by Islam, because the whole order of creation is bound by the laws of God, which are incorporated in the teachings of the *Quran*. In the case of man, however, though the laws of nature condition him, yet he has been endowed with reason and free will. Hence in spite of the fact that all men are by nature Muslims, by choice they may or may not be muslims.

Those who choose to deny God and refuse to obey Him have thrown a veil over their true nature and become infidels. A believer, on the other hand, is one who has faith in one God, in His laws, in the evil consequences of disobedience, and in the duty of following the example and precepts of the Prophet.

The obligations of a Muslim include the five pillars of Islam (*arkan*), a conformity with the commands of the *Shariat* and avoidance of the prohibitions.

The *Shariat* comprises regulations for the individual and also for his social, economic and political activities. According to Islam, the social order (*millat*) is bound together, not by ties of race, descent, colour or neighbourhood, but only by faith in the religion of Islam. Hence all those who follow one faith constitute one nation irrespective of all other considerations. Believers cannot join with unbelievers to form a united society or a state.

In the Islamic state all Musalmans have equal rights and obligations. But the non-Muslims in the state are not citizens or members of the Islamic society, and have only the rights of the *Zimmis*, whose life, property, customs and religion are protected, but who cannot participate in the government or administration of the state.

The basic principles of the Islamic polity are recognition of and faith in the unity of God and in the prophethood of Muhammad, and the vicegerency (*khilafat*) of the Muslim society (*millat*) as a whole.

The concept of the sovereignty of God (*hukumat-i-Ilahiya*) is utterly contrary to the modern conceptions of state and sovereignty. For the modern Indian nationalist separates religion from politics, basing the state on man's material interests. He confines the membership of the state only to those who reside within certain geographical boundaries and obey the laws made by the people. He treats nationalism and patriotism as categorical imperatives which justifies the uttermost sacrifice in the service of their nation.

As these principles came in conflict with Maududi's conception of Islam, they raised the issue of the duty of the Indian Muslim in regard to the struggle for independence.

Maududi is quite clear on these matters. According to him, the Muslims were as keen on securing the freedom of India as the other communities. But they considered independence as a means and not as an end. The end was to establish a state in which Muslims would not be treated as subject or dependants of foreign or indigenous non-Muslims. This state would approximate as far as possible to the idea of 'the abode of Islam' (*Dar-ul-Islam*). The Muslims would participate in the government of free India not as Indians but as Muslims, on condition that they were allowed to organise the education of their children, to observe the Islamic religious rites and social laws and to abolish un-Islamic customs and practices. They should not be involved in wars against their coreligionists abroad.

According to him, the Muslims could not accept the view that they might enjoy the freedom of belief and religious rites, but should merge their identity in a united nationality, so far as economic and political matters were concerned. Islam does not differentiate between religious and secular interests, and cannot agree to the bifurcation of life into religious and secular as suggested by the leaders of the Congress.

Maududi rejected outright the concept of territorial nationalism and attacked bitterly the ideology of the Indian National Congress and specially the views of Jawaharlal Nehru as altogether un-Islamic.

He regarded the idea of the unity of the Hindus and Muslims for political purposes as anathema. He considered secularism as identical with atheism which ought to have no place in state affairs. He looked upon the theory of economic interests constituting the basis of political unity as wholly repugnant to Islam, for it displaced religion and morality from their proper place and substituted materialism for the spiritual foundations of society and state.

He repudiated modernism root and branch and pointed his finger of utmost scorn at the individual and social behaviour of the Europeans. They appeared to him sunk in immorality and barbarism, from which they could only be saved by the acceptance of the principles of Islam.

He was utterly opposed to the concept of an Indian state with a democratic and parliamentary form of government, for in this type of state the majority would dominate and as the majority consisted of the Hindus, it would be impossible for the Muslim minority to safeguard and preserve the special character of the Islamic faith, culture and social order.

CHAPTER SIX

CURZON AND THE PARTITION OF BENGAL

There can happen no greater misfortune to a country than to be conquered and ruled by an alien race. In cases where the conqueror settles down in the conquered land, makes it his home, and breaks his relations with his native land, the two parties—the conqueror and the conquered, live together and evolve common ways of living and mutual understanding, even though they might retain some of their original ways and customs.

But when the conquerors remain attached to their homeland and stay as alien sojourners in the conquered country in order to govern and exploit, then in that case the conquest is an evil whether the rulers are civilized or savage. History may justify such misfortune as proper punishment for political inadequacies and failings of the conquered. Nevertheless, the fact cannot be gainsaid that such conquest is for the subjected people tantamount to civic death. A people who lose their independence lose the capacity for initiative and self-direction, forfeit the spontaneity of action which is the essence of life.

When the British conquered India the dead hand of British imperialism benumbed the living heart of India. Their panoply of power, glittering pomp, well-oiled administrative machinery, produced passive acquiescence of the people, and the appearance of peace and order. But in spite of some uneven material advance, economic and social progress and political awakening among the educated middle class; in spite of educational institutions which tended to modernise the Indian mind, but mainly fulfilled the requirements of a foreign government; in spite of the law courts, the railways, roads and other means of communication; in spite of the social and intellectual stirrings in a medieval society; the fact cannot be gainsaid that a dark pall of abject poverty, ignorance and disease covered the face of the land. What was worse was the dwarfing of the moral stature of the elite.

Unfortunately, foreign rule tends to break up not only the continuity of tradition, but also to warp and corrupt the mind and character of the subject people. Deprived of freedom of political action they develop a slavish mentality, a submissiveness and a disinclination to take risks. This affects their ability to face realities, act responsibly and conclude practically useful compromises. It promotes theoretic and academic attitudes.

But the human mind is so constituted that it asserts its natural freedom in the most adverse circumstances. There are always some men in every society whom fear of punishment or hope of reward will not affect. Nothing can bend or constrain them to disobey the voice of conscience.

I. Causes of Discontent

Reaction against Foreign Rule and Exploitation

Thus it was that resentment continued and disobedience of authority was endemic under British rule, although its expression took different forms in different times. The second volume of this history narrates the story of the attempts to overthrow British rule which met with failure. After the Revolt of 1857 sporadic movements of violence occurred in different parts of the country, but the educated middle class which was growing in numbers and influence in these years, chose to abandon the path of violence as futile. It began to organise itself to pursue what are called constitutional methods for redressing wrongs and for advancing towards responsible self-government. In 1885, the Indian National Congress was established to organise Indian opinion and press for the removal of grievances.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, however, British capitalist industrialism and its offspring imperialism made great strides. The British established their hegemony in the economy of the world and began the search for lands which could be exploited for the supply of raw materials and as markets for the absorption of British manufactured goods. This led to a vast expansion of the area under the Empire, and the development of the colonial system of economic relations between the metropolitan country and the dependent territories like India.

Imperialism had been advancing in waves since about the fourth decade of the nineteenth century and in the closing years it made its last great spurt. In the latest phase its pioneer was Joseph Chamberlain who gathered round him a number of talented men from the various schools of political thought. Conservative politicians like Salisbury, Liberals like Rosebery, Asquith and Haldane and Labour leaders like Sidney Webb, H.G. Wells, the early Bernard Shaw, and Ramsay Macdonald, became strong adherents of the imperialist idea.

In the last decade of the century the imperialist creed acquired a compulsive urgency because of the threat from the growing strength of Britain's rivals. The challenge naturally activated its defensive mechanism and exaggerated the emotional reaction of the British ruling class.

This inevitably had a deteriorating effect upon the relations between India, yearning for greater political rights and responsibilities, and

Britain apprehensive of any relaxation of its control over the resources of the Empire. Keir Hardie, the Labour leader, who visited India about this time, noted, "for the moment the gulf between the British official and the Indian people is widening I have fared sumptuously with princes, sat at the table and broken the bread with the educated middle class, and munched grain with the ryots, and the uniform unvarying testimony has been the same in every case."[1]

Social Relations

Cordiality had never been a marked feature of the relations between Indians and Englishmen. But estrangement had been accentuated by the Revolt of 1857. Subsequently social aloofness greatly increased and mutual dislike grew.

Ramsay MacDonald speaking about the British officials in India remarked, "but they are also the least imaginative and sympathetic of men. Nine-tenths of them return from their foreign appointments without having understood the mind of the natives they were ruling.... One asks them about native religion—that's not their subject; about native customs—that's not their subject; about native problems—that's not their subject. They come of a different race, they remain a different race. Their work is mechanical."[2]

The natural reaction of the Indians was one of violent though suppressed anger. They bore injustice, indignity and insult without signs of open retaliation, but the sense of shame, bitterness and humiliation pervaded their hearts. The feeling of helplessness and despair was occasionally overcome by acts of terrorism against individual Englishmen.

Economic Distress

But social and personal relations apart what stoked above all the fires of discontent was the pursuit of imperialist interests by the Government of India.

The precarious economic condition of the people was made manifest when there recurred a series of scarcities and famines during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Some of them caused starvation and death on an unprecedented scale, for example, the famines of 1876-78,[3] 1896-98,[4] 1899-1900.[5]

From 1885 onwards the Indian National Congress met every year. Its influence spread rapidly among the educated classes. It became the organ of the political opinions of the middle classes. Three main topics engaged its attention—(1) representative government and expansion of the number and functions of the Legislative Councils—central and provincial, (2) Indianisation of higher services, and (3) Indian poverty. In fact it linked representative government with poverty, as the resolution recorded in 1886 stated:

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[1] Keir Hardie, *India, Impressions and Suggestions*....1909, pp. 102-3.

[2] Ramsay MacDonald, *Labour and the Empire* (1907), pp. 26-27.

[3] Deaths—8 lacs over and above the normal death rate in Bombay Presidency and over 6 millions in the rest of famine area. See B.M. Bhatia. *Famines in India*, pp. 91-101.

[4] Deaths—Excess of deaths over the normal death rate 4.5 million for 1896-97 and, 65 million for 1896. *Ibid.*, p. 242.

[5] Deaths—Mortality in British Districts—1.25 million according to Government; 3.25 according to Digby. *Ibid.*, p. 261.

"That this Congress regards with the deepest sympathy and views with grave apprehension the increasing poverty of vast numbers of the population of India, and desires to record its firm conviction that the introduction of Representative Institutions will prove one of the most important political steps towards the amelioration of the condition of the people."[6]

In the fifth Congress session (1889) the scheme for the protection of the minorities was elaborated, and it was laid down :

"That whenever the Parsis, Christians, Muhammedans, or Hindus are in a minority, the total number of Parsis, Christians, Muhammedans or Hindus, as the case may be, elected to the Provincial Legislature, shall not, so far as may be possible, bear a less proportion to the total number of members elected thereto, than the total number of Parsis, Christians, Muhammedans, or Hindus, as the case may be, in such electoral jurisdiction, bear to the total population."[7]

In regard to the employment of Indians in the services the Congress was even more persistent. Not only did it demand larger numbers in all higher appointments, it also asked for simultaneous examination for the Civil Services in England and India.

The criticism of government measures and policies at the Congress sessions was repeated in hundreds of newspapers and from numerous platforms. Not only did Government become annoyed, it started taking steps to thwart it.

The change in the attitude of the Government towards the Congress specially and the Hindu community which apparently backed the Congress generally, was bound to evoke reciprocal reaction. The more impatient and the more outspoken among the politically-minded became critical of the cautious and moderate leaders, began to advocate more adventurous resistance of the Government. In Panjab the leaders of the Arya Samaj, for example, Lajpat Rai; in West India Tilak; in Bengal the mitators of the Italian Carbonari, and in Baroda Aurobindo Ghosh then expressed their dissatisfaction with the Congress for its nauseating and possibly hypocritical reiteration of loyalty to the British Crown and its undignified attitude of mendicancv

The New Spirit

A new spirit was thus beginning to pervade. It was fed upon resentment of British arrogance, the worsening of the economic conditions of the masses and resentment against political wrongs. This spirit provoked self-criticism and a search for self-identity, self-reliance and self-determination. World events provided impetus to the new spirit, for at the end of the nineteenth century, all Asia was astir. The Muslim countries of Northern Africa and Western Asia, Central Asia, the Far East were all experiencing the ferment of a new spirit—compound of reaction against the domination of the West and desire for rejuvenation of the backward societies of the East.

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[6] The Indian National Congress, 1886, Calcutta, Resolution No. 2 (G.A. Natesan, *The Indian National Congress*, 2nd edition, Part III., p. 3.).

[7] Resolution No. *ii* (5). 1889 Congress. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

The nineteenth century was a period of a marvellous uprising of nationalism all over the world, West and East. It endeavoured to realise itself through homogeneous societies and centralised states with a common language, a common loyalty and a common national sentiment, but in which "there was scarcely room for the privileges of minorities" territorial, linguistic or religious. In France, Germany and Great Britain the tendency towards solidarity, equality and centralisation prevailed.

In Ireland the Home Rule agitation had succeeded in convincing the section of the British Liberal Party headed by Gladstone that self-government could not be long denied.

In South Africa the Boers revolted. They fought valiantly to lower on the one hand, the prestige of the mighty British Empire, and on the other, to evoke admiration for the fighting qualities of the freedom-loving Boers. Japan had made great strides towards modernism and soon gave a striking demonstration of its national spirit.

India was affected by these developments. The unification of Italy had specially appealed to the educated class, so much so that Surendranath Banerjea delivered a series of lectures on the movement and wrote a life of Mazzini. Tilak was preaching the gospel of self-help and self-reliance, rousing the masses to participate in political activity and advocating dynamic programmes. Aurobindo Ghosh expressed his dissatisfaction with the Congress methods of agitation and desired the replacement of the old lamps by new.

II. Curzon's Regime

Curzon's Character

At this juncture history projected upon the scene its chosen instrument to start the seismic process which in less than half a century liquidated the British empire.

On 30 December 1898, Curzon set his foot upon the soil of India to assume the reins of an office which had been since his school days "the Mecca of his political pilgrimage". In his boyhood his imagination had been fired by listening to the address of Sir James Stephen to the Eton Literary Society and he had made assiduous efforts to prepare himself for the Viceroyalty of India.

His personal ambition was not the only inspiration for his bouts of colossal and frenzied energy, or the instigation for his long and wearisome journeys round the world and across the hot and dusty plains of the East. Tennyson's lines seem to reveal Curzon's passions:

"So pass I hostel, hall and grange;
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the holy Grail."[8]

The holy Grail in this case was nothing less than the destiny of the British Empire. Almost every year from 1882 to 1895, he undertook voyages of enquiry especially in Asiatic countries, to discover how it was going with the Empire. The scramble for the occupation of African territories among the European powers, and their rivalry for the extension of dominion and spheres of influence in Asia, had caused a new wave of imperialism to sweep over England. Curzon considered it his duty to study the question and find a solution which would ensure the stability and strength of the empire.

His many tours showed him how dangerous the situation was. His short term as Under Secretary of State for India (1891-92) and again as Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1895-98) confirmed him in his opinions and he determined to leave no stone unturned to avert the threats against and to reinvigorate the might of the imperial edifice.

He brought to bear on his task many qualities of a high order. Morley paid him a tribute in these words :

"You have never sent to India a Viceroy his superior, if indeed his equal, in force of mind, in unsparing remorseless industry, in passionate and devoted interest in all that concerns the well-being of India, with an imagination fired by the grandeur of political problems India presents—you never sent a man with more of all those attributes than when you sent Lord Curzon."[9]

Curzon was a brilliant intellectual—scholar, writer, speaker. He had ideas, initiative and drive and organisational ability of a high order. In translating his ideas into action he spared neither himself nor others. Efficiency was his watchword.

But he suffered from some serious defects of character. He was inordinately ambitious, overweeningly vain, obstinate, heedless of advice, contemptuous of opposition, self-righteous, unscrupulous, excitable and moody. He lacked imagination and sympathy, showed little understanding of men and rode roughshod over the feelings of even his own subordinates.

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[8] Tennyson, A., "Sir Galahad", *Early poems*, Vol. II (1888), p. 82.

[9] Keith, A.B., *Speeches and Documents on Indian Polity*, Vol. II, pp. 88-9 (Viscount Morely, of Blackburn, House of Lords, 23 February 1909).

Curzon's Ideas on Self-government

His views on politics were most reactionary. He held in contempt even the leaders of his own party, like Salisbury, if they differed from him on foreign policy. He disliked Gladstone for the advocacy of Home Rule for Ireland. Lloyd George was his pet aversion. He was a reactionary and an aristocrat for whom the propagators of democratic movements, as for instance the suffragettes who demanded political rights for women, and the Labour leaders who wanted to capture government, were the enemies of society.

In regard to India he entertained very definite, very truculent and withal reactionary opinions. These opinions may be considered from two opposite sides—(1) Britain's obligations towards India, and (2) India's role in the imperial affairs. In order to determine Britain's duty towards India, it was necessary to know what India was. Curzon asserted:

"They (Indians) are not one community, one language, one race, or one religion; they are a continent, an empire, almost a universe apart."[10]

He, therefore, concluded: "It will be well for England, better for India, and best of all for the cause of progressive civilization in general, if it be clearly understood from the outset....we have not the smallest intention of abandoning our Indian possessions, and that it is highly improbable that any such intention will be entertained by our posterity."[11]

Curzon recognised that the British as rulers had certain responsibilities towards the people of India. But he asked, "who are the voiceless millions who can neither read nor write their own tongues. The people of India are the ryots and the peasants, whose life is not one of political aspiration, but of mute penury and toil. The plans and policy of the Congress Party in India would leave the amorphous residuum absolutely untouched."[12]

The logic of these propositions led to the conclusion that the claims of the Indian National Congress had no validity whatsoever. When Curzon repudiated the claim of the Mahajana Sabha to represent the general public, George Hamilton, the Secretary of State for India (1895-1903), patted him on the back "for knocking their (Congressmen's) heads well together", and told him with a chuckle, "if the Congress in the course of a year or two totally collapses, you will have the credit of having been the main instrument of its extinction".[13]

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[10] Curzon, Speech at the dinner given in his honour at Savoy Hotel by the London Society of Pilgrims, on 6 April 1906, *Subjects of the Day*, p. 27.

[11] Fraser, Lovat, *India under Curzon and After* (Heinemann 1911), pp. 23-34.

[12] Curzons' speech in the House of Commons, March 28, 1892, in Keith, A B., *op. cit*, Vol, II., P. 63.

Thomas Raleigh, the Legal Member of Curzon's Executive Council, asserted, "the Congress expresses faithfully the opinions of that section of the Hindu community which sees in the concession of political rights the main object of India's ambition and English duty. ... The eloquent Bengali or Mahratta who finds his appropriate sphere of action in the Congress, is entitled to a fair hearing, but he is only one of many types of Indian character and sentiment.... (There are other) men with a different stamp—Mohammedan gentlemen, trained at Aligarh, chiefs of ancient lineage... and large number of educated native gentlemen... These men are not merely factors, they are governing factors in the policies of India, and there are many of them who regard the Congress with feelings which vary from amused indifference to active disapproval. Congress is engaged in a premature and unwise attempt to domesticate English political ideas in India. In the second place, the pretensions of the Congress are out of all proportion to its true significance, 99 per cent of the people whom it claims to represent, have never heard of its existence."[14]

Curzon's Ideas regarding Services

The same logic applied to the problem of appointing Indians to the higher services. In the budget speech of 1904, Curzon declared, "the highest ranking of civil employment in India... must as a general rule be held by Englishmen, for the reason that they possess partly by heredity, partly by upbringing, partly by education, the knowledge of the principles of government, the habits of mind, the vigour of character, which are essential for the task."[15]

Thus the two main planks in the programme of the Congress were knocked out, and it was made clear beyond doubt that Britain had no intention of either honouring the promises made in 1833 and 1858 or of conceding any position of influence in the government to Indians.

Curzon's Ideas regarding India's Role in Empire

What was then the role of the Indian people in the imperial system? Curzon's tours of the world and of the eastern lands had made it clear to him that Britain was face to face with a dangerous situation. It was isolated and friendless, all round rivals were rising up and challenging its hegemony—economic and political. The USA, Germany and

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[13] *Hamilton Papers,* Hamilton to Curzon, 24 January 1901.

[14] Raleigh, T., *Lord Curzon in India,* Vol. I. Introduction, pp. xviii-xix.

[15] Curzon — Budget Speech, 30 March 1904. See *Speeches by Lord Curzon,* Vol. III. p. 410.

Japan were fast developing industrially; and in international affairs France, Russia and Germany were staking their claims to territorial extension and building up their military power, which constituted a serious threat to the British Empire.

The USA had occupied the Philippines and other islands and thus excluded British expansion in South East Asia. It had rebuked Britain for interfering in the Venezuelan dispute. Japan was fast developing into a first rate power. The European nations' ambitions in Africa, the Middle East, China and the region east of the Malayas, all caused anxiety to the guardians of the far flung British empire. Confronted with this predicament Curzon discovered the importance and value of Britain's Indian dominions.

In a speech which he gave at the Guild Hall on the occasion of receiving the freedom of the city of London he remarked :—

"I should like to convey to this audience some idea of the part India is capable of playing, nay, of the part that it has recently played in the Imperial burden ...If you want to save your colony of Natal from being overrun by a formidable enemy, you ask India for help, and she gives it; if you want to rescue the white man's legations from massacre at Peking, and the need is urgent, you ask the Government of India to despatch an expedition, and they despatch it; if you are fighting the Mad Mullah in Somaliland, you soon discover that Indian troops and Indian generals are best qualified for the task, and you ask the Government of India to send them; if you desire to defend any of your extreme outposts or coaling stations of the Empire, in Mauritius, Singapore, Hong-Kong, even Tien-tsin or Shan-hai-kwan, it is to the Indian army that you turn; if you want to build a railway in Uganda or in the Sudan, you apply for Indian labour."[16]

He might have added the words of Rosebery who expatiated on the value of the Indian Empire which offered "a variety of guarantees and opportunities to her workers, the working men of all classes". He could also remind the merchants of London of the utility of India as a large and safe field for British investments.

The manner in which Curzon addressed himself to the discharge of his twofold task was characteristically self-confident, peremptory and vigorous, unmindful of sentiment or advice, even of his superiors.

India in International Affairs

In the international field there were three main rivals of Britain—France, Germany and Russia. It was necessary to checkmate their designs. France had built up an empire in South-East Asia and was making suspicious moves in countries on the eastern borders of India. Excluded from Egypt it was acquiring domination over north-western Africa.

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[16] Curzon, Lord, Speech on 20 th July 1904, cited by Bennett, C., *The concept of Empire*, P. 346.

After the incident at Fashoda, it established a consulate at Muscat and wangled a coaling station in the Sultan's dominion. This menaced British communications to India and Australia. It also gave entry to a foe into the Persian Gulf which was regarded as the exclusive sphere of British influence.

The Germans under the direction of the young and ambitious Kaiser Wilhelm II, entertained vast schemes of colonial and commercial expansion. Not only was he greedy for a share in the division of Africa he was proclaiming himself as the champion and friend of Muslim countries. A German military mission was training the armies of Ottoman Turkey. Germany had planned a Railway to connect Berlin with Baghdad and to terminate at Basra and Kuwait. Its emissaries visited the Persian Gulf to the great annoyance of Britain. It opened consular offices in Iran, Bushire. The telegram of congratulation which the Kaiser sent to Kruger on the discomfiture of the Jameson raid was significant.

Russia was the most formidable rival of all. The Russian advance along several lines in Asia spelt danger to British interests. Already vast territories had been annexed in Central Asia bringing Russian forces to the borders of Afghanistan and even more inconveniently across the narrow strip of Wakhan to Chitral. Russia had brought northern Persia under its political influence and prepared a scheme to build a railway line from the north to the south (Julfa to Ahwaz), and was seeking bases in the Persian Gulf, Bundar Abbas, Chahbahar opening on the Indian Ocean. It established a number of consulates in Persia and its agents approached the Sultan of Muscat for a coaling station. In Tibet Russian agents were trying to take advantage of China's growing weakness to establish influence.

Curzon understood the meaning of these developments and undertook measures to safeguard the vital interests of the empire. The key to the position was the Persian Gulf. By a judicious combination of diplomacy and show of force the Sultan of Muscat was obliged to withdraw concessions made to France and Russia. The British presence in the gulf-islands and ports, was affirmed. Commercial missions were sent to towns in southern Iran. Tariff agreements were negotiated, roads built and a telegraph line laid out from Baluchistan through Iran to Europe. The fruits of the efforts were gathered when in 1907 an Anglo-Russian convention was signed and the Triple Entente inaugurated eliminating Russian and French rivalry on the western frontiers of India—Afghanistan, Iran, the Sultanates of the Persian Gulf.

In 1903, Curzon alarmed at the presence of Russian agents in Tibet sent an expedition under Francis Younghusband's command to Lhasa. The Tibetans were easily overcome and an indemnity of half a million pounds was imposed. The Chumbi valley was occupied as a guarantee for the payment. The government in England did not approve of the adventure whose immediate result was the re-establishment of the waning suzerainty of China over Tibet.

Two other measures were adopted for the purpose of improving imperial defence. One was the organisation of the North-West Frontier Province and the other the reorganisation of the Indian Army. The latter brought Curzon into headlong clash with Kitchener and resulted in the humiliation and recall of the great proconsul.

According to Curzon, India's obligation to the Empire was to subserve its international defence requirements, as also to promote its economic interests. In order to achieve these objects it was necessary that :—

(1) India's moral and material resources ought to be under the absolute control of the British rulers to be utilized for the good of the Empire.

(2) India should be provided with an efficient administration, so that the silent and inarticulate masses might be satisfied and the clamour of some people for political advancement discredited. This meant administering justice between man and man, equality before the law, freedom from tyranny and injustice and oppression—in other words, government for the people but not by the people.

He explained that "his task was to ameliorate the lot of the masses while at the same time encouraging the middle classes to take over the minor chores of Government for which, as a race, they were fitted."[17] He was strongly opposed to the importation of the ideas of democracy to the Indian sub-continent. He was certain that "liberty, equality and fraternity were definitely not for the Indians".[18] He treated the claim for those as the "vapourings of a few misguided idealists".[19]

In his speech at the Delhi Durbar on January 1, 1903, he solemnly declared, "The India of the future will, under Providence, not be an India of diminishing plenty, of empty prospects, or of justifiable discontent, but one of expanding industry, of awakened faculties, of increasing prosperity, and of more widely distributed comforts and wealth. I have faith in the conscience and the purpose of my own country and I believe in the almost limitless capacities of this. But under no other conditions can this future be realised than the unchallenged supremacy of the Paramount Power and under no other controlling authority is this capable of being maintained than that of the British Crown."[20]

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[17] Mosley, L., *Curzon, the end of an epoch*, p. 88.

[18] ..*Ibid.*, p. 87.

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] Durbar Speech, I January, 1903, Raleigh, Vol. II. pp. 15-19.

III. Curzon's Ideas of Strengthening British Supremacy

But while he totally rejected what he regarded as the presumptuous assertion of the nationalists, he realized the need for discovering a counterpoise against them. To secure this end he mobilised the elements of the Indian society whose loyalty to the rulers could be evoked by appealing to their fears and hopes. The loyalty of some Indians could be induced by the display of the majesty and pomp, power and pelf of the Empire and of others by the exhibition of justice and administrative efficiency, by making a strong impression of the moral prestige and organisational superiority of the British. But the principal means of combating the new spirit was to play one community against another or the policy of counterpoise.

In the first year of his viceroyalty Curzon drew up a programme of reform containing twelve items and in subsequent years two similar lists of measures to improve administration were prepared. It is not necessary to analyse the lists and to discuss the manner of their implementation. In all his measures, economic, administrative, cultural or political, the one dominant object was the promotion of the force and vigour of the empire by the utilization of all the human and material resources of India. India could be used as the fulcrum to keep the empire from toppling over by its own weight, or by the machinations of the rivals of Britain. He looked upon India as "the pivot and centre, not the geographical, but the political and imperial centre of the British empire."[21]

The Educated Class

This philosophy determined the policy of enforcing unquestioning obedience of the people, which was threatened from the side of the Indian intelligentsia. Therefore, Curzon desired to humiliate them and destroy their influence. He confessed gleefully, "My own belief is that Congress is tottering to its fall, and one of my ambitions is to assist it to a peaceful demise."[22]

Humiliation was poured on educated Indians in the convocation address at the Calcutta University. He told the graduates :

"I hope I am making no false or arrogant claim when I say that the highest ideal of truth is to a large extent a Western conception."[23] He added that craftiness and diplomatic wile had always been in high repute in the East, as was proved by oriental literature. He said : "In your epics truth will often be extolled as a virtue; but quite as often it is attended with some qualification, and very often praise is given to successful deception practised with honest aim".[24]

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[21] Raleigh, *op. cit.*, Vol I., p.8.

[22] *Hamilton Papers*, Curzon to Hamilton , 18 November 1900.

[23] *Speeches by Lord Curzon in India.*, Vol. II, p. 222.

[24] *Ibid.*

Burke had wisely held that it was not possible to indict a whole nation. Curzon disregarded the advice with the result that he put his head into the hornets' nest. The educated class and the Press hauled him over hot coals for the statement so insulting to India's *amour propre*. Even his official biographer Lord Ronaldshay admitted that Curzon displayed a surprising lack of perception. Whether the attacks were mendacious as Curzon maintained or not, they were provoked by the bitterness which followed the unpopular Calcutta University Act, and worsened the relations between the rulers and the ruled.

Calcutta Corporation

The Calcutta Corporation Act illustrates the political philosophy of Curzon—contempt for the representative principle, faith in the centralization of authority in British hands and the reduction of people's influence. These were doctrines directly in conflict with Indian opinion.

At the instance of Alexander Mackenzie, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, who held that there were too many members without stake and with a variety of interests who hampered the executive,[25] Curzon intent upon curbing self-governing institutions sponsored the amendment of the Act. The constitution of the Calcutta Corporation was changed by reducing the representatives of the public from 50 to 25 and giving preponderance to the British element in the corporation.[26]

Administrative Reforms

Most of his other administrative measures were motivated by his principal aim. If he improved the administrative machinery and its methods; created new departments like archaeology; reorganized the police; established the Railway Board; encouraged the arts; built a monument like the Victoria Memorial at Calcutta and otherwise beautified the capital city; indulged in organising fields of cloth of gold or the Durbars of which the Coronation Durbar at Delhi (1903) was celebrated on a scale of splendour and ostentation exceeding all previous similar displays; and invited royalty to parade across the country for exploiting the traditional Hindu feeling of the divinity of the monarch; the main object was to perpetuate the glory that was the Empire. He approached his self-imposed task with brave hopes and high aspirations so much so that he came to believe "that he was India's only hope, the fulcrum of her present, the keystone of her future."[27]

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[25] Buckland, C.E., *Bengal under the Lieutenant Governors*, Vol., II., p. 979.

[26] Home Department, Municipal, July 1899, Nos. 1-8, pp. 1-7 and 353-54.

[27] Mosley, L., *op.cit*, p. 90.

Land Revenue System

But Curzon knew that "a nation destitute of means to keep body and soul together can never be content—can never be loyal".[28] Earlier Dadabhai Naoroji had drawn attention to "the wretched, heart-rending, blood-boiling condition of India".[29]

The Indian National Congress drew year after year the attention of Government to the increasing misery and starvation of millions of Indians. The Indian press—most of the leading newspapers in English like the *Bengalee,* the *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* the *Mahratta* and the *Hindu*—filled their columns with stories of the sufferings and misfortunes of the masses. The Indian language papers were even more outspoken in their denunciation.

Of course Curzon, the 'superior person', knew all about it, but in order to belittle the efforts of the educated on behalf of their unfortunate fellow countrymen, he had no hesitation in pronouncing the Indian National Congress as "a mixed up minority completely out of touch with the feelings of their fellow Indians".[30] According to him "the composition of the Congress....has deprived them of any right to pose as the representatives of more than a small section of the community".[31]

Nevertheless, the criticism of the government by national leaders had some effect. For when R.C. Dutt published the four Open Letters to the Viceroy (1900) Curzon was cut to the quick. "Such a challenge was one which Lord Curzon, with his belief in a benevolent autocracy as the form of Government, best calculated to protect and promote the interests of the illiterate masses, accepted with enthusiasm, for it provided him with an opportunity of publishing to the world the beneficient character of British Rule."[32]

Unfortunately the Resolution which he himself drafted was an advocate's attempt at "a vindication of our Land Settlement and Revenue Policy *urbi et orbi,* an answer to our critics and an attempt to convince a doubting public"[33]. rather than a well thought out and comprehensive plan of reform of a system whose ramifications affected the whole of the Indian economy. Curzon had no scruples in misrepresenting the views of the critics. He bypassed the arguments of those who explained the causes of the famines, falsely accused them of advocating the system of permanent settlement established by Cornwallis in Bengal, and rejected the remedial measures suggested to improve the policies of settlements and revenue assessments. His suggestions for the protection of the peasants from the landlords and the moneylenders and for developing in them the spirit of responsibility and self-reliance were beneficial but inadequate. The other measures e.g., the reorganisation of the agricultural department, the setting up of the Pusa Institute for research, the improvement of agricultural education and starting model farms were useful. The famine code with elaborate instructions for relief reduced suffering caused by scarcities and famines. But as the experience of later years showed their total effect upon agricultural conditions was slight. Naturally the political object of screening the peasants from the influence of the intelligentzia was not realised.

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[28] *Amrit Bazar Patrika* (Calcutta), 7 November 1894.

[29] Dadabhai Naoroji, *Poverty of India,* p. 229.

[30] Mosley, L., *op-cit,* p. 88.

[31] *Ibid.*

[32] Ronaldshay, Earl of, *Life of Lord Curzon*, Vol. II, p. 180.

[33] *Ibid.,* p. 181.

Calcutta University

The crowning ambition of Curzon was to destroy the political influence of the educated middle class, among whom the Bengali intelligentzia were the most prominent. His first attack against them was through the reorganisation of the Calcutta Corporation. The second important measure was the educational reorganisation which he had planned in the very first year of his viceroyalty, but effected later.

In 1899, Hamilton, the Secretary of State for India, suggested the "exercise of greater control over education, its organisation and text books".[34] Curzon declared at the convocation of the Calcutta University in 1900, "My desire is to revindicate on behalf of the State and its various provincial agents that responsibility which there has been a tendency to abdicate."[35]

In 1901, Raleigh deplored that the Calcutta University "had more or less got out of hand and had come to be manipulated in class or party interest by well-drilled cliques."[36]

In 1901, Curzon called a conference at Simla to discuss reforms in the educational system and on its recommendation appointed the Indian Universities Commission in 1902.

His complaint against University education that it was wholly examination ridden was just, and the language in which he denounced the system though somewhat exaggerated, was substantially true.

On the report of the Commission action was taken. But somewhat illogically the reform which this pernicious system evoked, was not improvement in the system of examination or studies, but the imposition of the central control by reconstruction of the governing bodies of the universities so that they became departments of government, in accordance with the wishes of Orange, the Director-General of Education, and Risley, the Secretary to Government. They noted, "We hold that the only chance of introducing a high standard of education in India and of maintaining it at a proper level is to be found in the exercise of Government influence on a large scale".[37]

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[34] *Hamilton Papers*, Hamilton to Curzon, 18 May 1899.

[35] *Speeches by Lord Curzon*, Vol. I, p. 249.

[36] Raleigh's note dated 7 February 1901, Home Department, Education A, 1901, Progs. Nos. 122-129.

In 1904 the Act was passed which gave effect to government aim. The criticism and protests of the Indian members of the Council and the Indian Press were ignored.

The reduction of non-official control over education was only one of the planks in the programme. The main objective of Curzon was to mobilise all the elements which could be pressed into service against the Congress.

The Policy of Counterpoise and Rallying the Loyal Elements—Princes

The first element obviously was the feudatory states. Many of them were creations of the British, others were ancient, but all depended for their existence on the British Government. At one time distrusted and held in subordinate isolation, after the Revolt of 1857 they began to receive more sympathetic treatment. "The interests of the Sovereign Power and the Princes and Chiefs grow more nearly identical as the years pass. Both are concerned to preserve the existing system, because both realise that failure to resist the enemies of order and good government might plunge them into common ruin". With these considerations in mind Curzon began to woo their loyalty and support. They were told "they were no longer detached appendages of Empire, but its participators and instruments."

They were assured of protection and security and were in return expected to accept "the corresponding obligation to act in all things with loyalty to the Sovereign Power, to abstain from all acts injurious to the Government."[38]

The partnership was developed by breaking down isolation and encouraging closer intimacy with the Government. In 1901, the Imperial Cadet Corps was constituted of the cadets of princely and noble houses and trained for the profession of arms to obtain commissions in the Army. Another step in the same direction was training the youth of princely families in improved Chiefs' Colleges. Thus, it was sought to strengthen the ties which bound the princes to the Government, and to deepen their consciousness of separateness from Indians of the other classes.

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[37] Home Department, Education Proceedings, December, 1903, Nos. 67-85.

[38] Fraser, L., *op-cit.*, p. 210.

Classes Communities and Interests

The one common belief which runs like a thread in the statements of British thinkers, statesmen, administrators, and the British residents in India—officials and non-officials, and the British living in retirement in England, was that India was a mosaic of races, religions, cultures interests—a multitude with no bond of unity.

They looked upon with contempt the educated class of Indians who claimed that India was a nation and therefore asserted that "a nation must be a state and state a nation';"[39] such ideas were poohpoohed.

Lytton wrote to Salisbury: "The only political representatives of native opinion are the Baboos whom we have educated to write semi-seditious articles in the native press."

Salisbury expressed his agreement in these words: "The more artificial and weakly elements, which we ourselves have made and have brought into prominence." [40]

Morley, however, recognised that though people talked of the educated class as an infinitesimal section, "So they are in numbers; but it is fatally idle to say that the infinitesimal fraction does not count."[41]

They were convinced that the growth of nationality in India was, if not impossible, at least a far off dream. Under this belief they naturally considered it their duty to recognise and encourage different interests and groups, especially because such patronage accentuated differences and therefore reduced the risks involved in combination and unity. This policy was followed from the very beginning. For, like in any other country there was in India, too, amultiplicity of interests and groups. A variety of economic interests—agricultural, industrial, mercantile; racial interests—European, Anglo-Indian, martial races, backward races, Aryans, Dravidians and so on; social groups—castes and communities; religious groups, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, etc., political interests—princely group, landholding group, professional group and others. They all sucked the sap of sectional vitality under the warm and energising sunshine of British patronage. Associations to safe-guard the claims of each group and to win for it government support proliferated. Organisations to effect social reform and to cater for the educational needs of the particular groups multiplied, e.g., Zamindar Associations, European and Eurasian or Anglo-Indian Associations; Brahmin, Kayastha, Vaish, Rajput, Maratha, .Dhangar and other societies and conferences to press their claims for special favours of Government. Schools and colleges sprang up in the name of Hindus, Muslims and their sects and divisions. And to top all, Hindus and Muslims founded separate educational institutions, Hindi and Urdu societies, even banks and political associations. For fissiparous tendencies a favourable climate existed and they had full opportunities to grow.

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[39] Barker, E., *National Character.*, pp. 16-17.

[40] *Cambridge History cf India*, Vol. VI, p. 545.

[41] Speech in the House of Commons, June 6, 1907, in Morley Viscount, *Indian Speeches* (1907-9), p. 23.

IV. PARTITION OF BENGAL

Bengal before Partition

Curzon's masterstroke gave a fillip to these tendencies. His Partition of Bengal ostensibly aiming at the improvement of an oversized and under administered province, was really a measure whose object was to break the growing solidarity of the political community which led India in opposition to Government. It was also a demonstration of the strength of the British Raj to prove that it could afford to hold public opinion in contempt.

As the importance of the Partition in the history of the struggle for independence is enormous it is necessary to deal with it at some length.

The province of Bengal in early times consisted of three divisions—Vanga (Banga), Gauda and Varendra. It had an individuality of its own—racial, cultural and linguistic. Its capital under the Sena dynasty was at Vikrampur near Dacca in East Bengal. Vikrampur and Mymensingh were the principal seats of Sanskrit learning. Then the region passed under the rule of the Muslim kings, but its geographical identity continued. The capital was shifted from Vikrampur to nearby Dacca. The Muslim rulers patronised the Bengali language and a rich literature developed. Arts and crafts with a stamp of Bengal's own genius flourished.

In 1757, the British conquered Bengal, and as the chariot of conquest moved westward, eastward and southward, Bengal grew haphazardly into a greatly swollen province. At one time apart from Bengal proper Bihar and Orissa, the whole of Uttar Pradesh including Delhi, parts of the Central Provinces, Chhota Nagpur and Assam were included in the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal.

The Need for Reorganisation

But this was evidently too large a charge. In 1836, the North-Western Provinces (Uttar Pradesh) were separated and placed under a Lieutenant-Governor. In 1854, the Governor General was relieved of the direct administration of the territories then comprising the Presidency of Bengal and a separate Lieutenant Governorship was created. The territories comprised an area of 2,39,000 square miles and a population of over 60 million. The administration of such an extensive province consisting of numerous districts sprawling over wide distances was not an easy task for one administrative head. As early as 1860, the Indigo Commission had suggested the redistribution of the province. In 1868, a Committee was set up to make enquiries and report. The Committee found tha "Bengal is practically ungoverned."[42] The result was that in 1874 Assam and three districts of Bengal—Sylhet, Goalpara and Cachar, were taken away and placed under a Chief Commissioner. In 1892 the Lushai Hill tract was transferred to Assam.

When Willliam Ward was the Chief Commissioner of Assam he submitted a scheme for the administrative and economic improvement of the province in which it was suggested that some parts of Bengal be incorporated in Assam.[43] But Ward's successor Henry Cotton opposed the scheme, and it made no further progress.[44]

But these piecemeal transfers did not solve either the problem of Bengal or of Assam, the one was too large, the other too small. And so in 1896-97 a discussion to find a solution was started between Bengal and Assam. The Bengal officers, the Indian public opinion and the European merchants were opposed to any dismemberment of the province and favoured raising its status to a Governorship with an executive council. But the higher officials of the Government of India were opposed to the proposal of conversion to a governor's province with a Council.

Schemes for Redistribution of Provinces—Curzon's View

At this stage Curzon arrived in Calcutta and took over the reins of office. He found his secretariat engaged in discussing a number of cases of territorial adjustments in the differents parts of India—the Central Provinces, Orissa, Panjab, Bombay, Madras and Bengal. He felt very annoyed and asked, "Is there no such thing as the head of the Government? Would it be considered creditable that the really important issues should have been under discussion for more than a year without the file ever being sent to the Viceroy?"[45]

His wrath was aroused because while the Secretaries were treating the issues on the narrow basis of administrative convenience, he felt that they involved important political issues. He was thinking of the incorporation of Berar into British India, of the future of Sind and Orissa, of developing Chittagong port to relieve Calcutta and help Assam According to him the boundaries of Bengal, Assam, the Central Provinces and Madras were "antiquated, illogical and productive of inefficiency."

He was, above all, apprehensive of the dangers involved in allowing the consolidation of the people of any region. In reply to a suggestion of Ibbetson that Berar may go to Bombay, he wrote. "I cannot contemplate any proposal which would add to the strength or solidarity of the Maratha community with anything but dismay......The Marathas of the Bombay Deccan (are) the most able and the most dangerous of the opponents of our rule in India. Why then should we go and gratuitously make a present to Poona of this enormous accretion of political strength......multiplying the forces of our enemies, consolidating the Maratha race."[46]

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[42] Broomfield, J. M., *The Partition of Bengal* (paper read at the Indian History Congress, 1960).

[43] Home Department Public A, Progs. May 1897, No.s 204-234. Chief Secretary Assam to Secretary Government of India, 25 November 1896.

[44] *Ibid.* Sir H. Cotton's Note, 26 January 1897.

[45] Home Department, Public Progs., December 1903, Nos. 149-160, pp. 3-4 Curzon's note dated 24 May 1902.

Ibbetson applied the same doctrine to Bengal. He minuted, "the influence of Eastern Bengal in the politics of the province is great, out of all proportion to the real political importance, in so much that the Bengali altogether overshadows the Behari, who is in every thing save the use (or abuse) of language immeasurably his superior. It is an object of great political and administrative importance to diminish this influence by separating one of its great centres from the others."[47]

Curzon completely agreed with these views. He added, "these Eastern districts of Bengal are a hotbed of the purely Bengali movement, unfriendly if not seditious in character". [47] Thus taking advantage of the necessity for reorganising the oversized province of Bengal, Curzon contemplated the execution of his imperious design of destroying the influence of the intelligentzia over Bengal and of Bengal over the whole of India.

Publicly it was argued that Bengal was vast, the Lieutenant-Governor was saddled with an unbearable burden—administering an area nearly 190,000 square miles with a population of 78.5 million souls, and a gross revenue of 1,140 lakhs of rupees. This resulted in the loss of personal touch of the head of the province, and more secretariat govern ment, which was always the most uninspired and unprogressive form of administration. It was also noted that the attention paid to Calcutta. the capital, deprived the outlying districts and cities of the share due to them.

Curzon rejected the solutions suggested by some officials and non-officials, viz. 1) conversion of Bengal into a governor's presidency with an executive council, and 2) the removal of Bihar, Chhota Nagpur and Orissa from Bengal and formation of a province of all Bengali speaking people. Besides these two, other alternatives were put forward, but none found favour with the Viceroy.

Curzon's First Scheme

So Curzon proceeded to draft his scheme of dismemberment of Bengal. It contemplated the reduction of the population of Bengal by 11 million people, its area by the transfer of the Chittagong division including the port, and the districts of Dacca and Mymensingh to Assam. But it left Bihar, Chhota Nagpur and Orissa within Bengal.

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[46] *Ibid.*, p. 22, Curzon's note dated 6 March 1903

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 39, Ibbetson's Minute, dated 23 April 1903.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 68, Curzon's Minute, dated 1st June 1903.

The scheme was approved by the Executive Council, and Risley, the Secretary prepared letters to be sent to the provincial governments of Bengal, Assam, the Central Provinces and Madras. Unfortunately he reproduced Curzon's arguments including the political one. When Curzon saw the paper he was startled, for he wanted to conceal from the public that Dacca and Mymensingh were being severed from Bengal on political grounds. He noted on the file, "If the letter to Bengal were published in its present form, it would create absolute consternation, and would actually defeat the very end that we have in view. When I wrote my minute for the confidential information of my colleagues, it never occurred to me for a moment that its contents would be practically reproduced to be dissected by every newspaper scribe in Bengal. What I could safely say in the privacy of the Council Chamber is not necessarily suitable for proclamation from the house tops. Secretary has produced a draft which would be disastrous. I have therefore revised it. Neither do I propose to send a copy of my minute home......It will be sufficient if I send a copy privately to Secretary of State to explain the inner meaning of much that it has not been found altogether advisable to say in the letter to Bengal."[49]

When the scheme was published in December 1903, there was a hue and cry against it. The Press denounced it. *Ananda Bazar Patrika* (Calcutta), *Charu Mihir* (Mymensingh), *Sanjivani* (Calcutta) *Basumati* (Calcutta), the *Dacca Prakash* (Dacca), the *Bengalee* (Calcutta), the *Dacca Gazette* (Dacca) the *Jyoti* (Calcutta), and a host of other papers wrote angry condemnatory articles.[50] A number of associations presented memorials to Government pointing out the grievous consequences of the scheme. The Bengal National Chamber of Commerce protested strongly and in its well reasoned memorial covered the entire range of objections against the scheme. The Central National Muhammedan Association of Calcutta conveyed its disapproval of the scheme. It said in its memorial, "Judged by the standards of civilization, languages habits, past traditions, nature of revenue settlements, and a hundred other matters more or less important, the people of Dacca, Mymensingh, Tippera, Noakhali, and Chittagong have infinitely more in common with Bengal than Orissa and Chhota Nagpur, and if relief is needed, it ought to be in directions other than those indicated in Mr. Risley's etter."[51]

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[49] *Ibid.*, p. 75. Curzon's Minute dated 10 November 1903.

[50] *Report on the Native Newspapers, Bengal*, July-December 1903.

The zamindars of Bengal met the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal at his residence, Belvedere. They told him "to divide one race in two and place it under different administrations would defeat the avowed objects of British rule in India to create among us a national feeling and make us fit for representative government."[52]

At countless public meetings the scheme was execrated and anathematised, but the Government remained adamant. The respected public leaders of Bengal argued, appealed, importuned, and foreboded dire consequences, but without the slightest effect. The people of Dacca, Mymensingh and Chittagong protested at numerous gatherings, and that of West Bengal denounced the proposal at public meetings and in pamphlets.

Curzon pretended to be unimpressed. He agreed with Risley, the Home Secretary, that political advantages of the transaction were overriding. Risley wrote, "Bengal united is a power, Bengal divided will pull several different ways. This is perfectly true and is one of the great merits of the scheme."[53]

Ibbetson, the Home Member, dismissed the agitation of the educated class as based on interested motives, and stated: "I think however that the agitators clearly perceive that the transfer will put an end to or at any rate greatly weaken the existing preponderance in the provincial politics of Bengal proper which absolutely overshadows Bihar, Orissa &c. But this preponderance is an evil and it is most desirable to diminish it."[54]

In order to counter the public propaganda against the partition, and to persuade Eastern Bengal in its favour Curzon personally undertook a tour of Chittagong, Dacca and Mymensingh districts. At Dacca on 18 February 1904, he told his audience:

"When a proposal is put forward which would make Dacca the centre, and possibly the capital of a new and self-sufficing administration, which must give to the people of those districts by reason of their numerical strength and their superior culture, the preponderating voice in the province so created, which would invest the Muhammedans in Eastern Bengal with a unity which they have not enjoyed since the days of old Musalman Viceroys and Kings, which must develop local interests and trade to a degree that is impossible so long as you remain the appendage of another administration—can it be that the people of these districts are to be advised by their leaders to sacrifice all these great advantages from fear? Do you mean to be so blind to your future as to repudiate the offer?"[55]

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[51] Home Dept. Public A Progs. February 1905, Nos. 155-157. Babu Sita Nath Roy to Chief Secretary Govt. of Bengal, 3 February 1904, Memorandum of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, pp. 171-184. Nawab Syed Ameer Husain's letter to Govt. of Bengal, dated 17 February 1904, pp. 191-92.

[52] *Ibid.*, Secretary, Landholders' Association to Chief Secretary, Bengal, 1 March 1904.

[53] *Ibid.*, p. 3. Risleys note' dated 7 February 1904.

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 7. Ibbeston's minute, dated 8 February 1904.

To appeal to communal jealousy and pride, to excite communal ambitions by promising favours from government and to stimulate cupidity by holding out alluring prospects of economic prosperity was one part of the policy, the other he explained in a despatch to Brodrick, the Secretary of State, in these words:

"Calcutta is the centre from which the Congress party is manipulated throughout the whole of Bengal and indeed the whole of India. Its best wire-pullers and its most frothy orators all reside here. The perfection of their machinery is truly remarkable. They dominate public opinion in Calcutta, they affect the High Court. They frighten the Local Government and they are not sometimes without serious influence upon the Government of India. The whole of their activity is directed to creating an agency so powerful that they may one day be able to force a weak government to give them what they desire."[56]

On the eve of his Dacca speech he wrote to the Secretary of State: "The Bengalis who like to think themselves a nation, and who dream of a future when the British will have been turned out and a Bengali Babu will be installed in Government House, Calcutta, of course bitterly resent any disruption that will be likely to interfere with the realization of this dream. If we are weak enough to yield to their clamour now we shall not be able to dismember or reduce Bengal again, and you will be cementing and solidifying in the eastern flank of India a force already formidable and certain to be a source of increasing trouble in future."[57]

The argument that the Partition was demanded by the Muslims is contrary to facts; that the aim of the Partition was to improve the condition of the backward Muslims of the eastern districts of Bengal and Assam was specious. The backwardness of the Muslims was due to the British established land revenue system and general administration. A vast proportion of the Muslims of these territories belonged to the cultivator class, who were the victims of this system. They, like the members of the same class in other parts of India, were exploited and oppressed by the moneylenders and landholders, because of the land laws which gave the opportunity to the landlords to grind them down and throw them into the clutches of the moneylenders. The Partition provided no remedy for the ills of these unfortunate people.

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[55] Curzon's Dacca Speech of 18 February 1904; see *Speeches by Lord Curzon in India*, Vol. III, p. 298.

[56] Curzon Papers, Curzon to Brodrick, 2 February 1905.

[57] *Ibid.*, Curzon to Brodrick, 17 February 1904.

There had been from time to time agrarian troubles in Bengal, uprisings of peasants against the landed gentry which occasionally assumed communal bias, but they were essentially an expression of economic distress. The Partition did nothing to ameliorate the condition of this class, nor did the so-called Muslims leaders show any interest in ameliorating the condition of the peasants.

The Partition was effected neither because the Hindus or the Muslims had expressly demanded it, nor because the administrative problem could not be solved otherwise, but because the British rulers were alarmed at the growth of national solidarity in India, and were anxious to thwart it.

Curzon's speeches and despatches reveal without a shadow of doubt what his real motives were. But his tour in East Bengal caused him a great deal of disappointment. In the words of his biographer, "yet his speeches in Eastern Bengal in 1904, for all the felicity of their phrasing and all the cogency of their reasoning, struck no responsive chord in the audience to which they were addressed."[58]

The Revised Scheme of Partition

Curzon apparently realised that the scheme of reorganisation a formulated first was unacceptable in its present form and felt that a more ambitious and more extensive reconstruction was required, if the people of East Bengal were to accept it and the influence of Calcutta was to be weakened.

The ball of revision was set rolling by the Government of India and the Bengal Government welcomed it and suggested in their letter dated 6 April 1904, an enlargement of the plan, and instead of the transfer of a few districts to Assam, the creation of a new province with its capital at Dacca. The Government of India improved on the suggestions and revised the scheme of the Bengal Government still further. The scheme which emerged from these discussions reduced the old province of Bengal in size and population to 1,41,580 square miles of territory and 54.4 million inhabitants and created a new province called Eastern Bengal and Assam consisting of an area of 1,06,540 square miles and a population of 31 million souls. From the Government's point of view, the redistribution possessed many advantages. It afforded substantial relief to the administration of Bengal, gave to the new province a well defined river boundary along almost the whole length on the west, and placed the north of Bengal altogether under the new province.

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[58] **Ronaldshay,** *op., cit.*, Vol. II., p. 325.

But the great advantages of the proposal were two: (1) that it would constitute a province with an overwhelming majority of Muslims, for its population would consist of 18 million Muslims and 12 million Hindus; "not only would it give Dacca a central position in relation to the rest of the province, but it would tend to confer on that province the special character where Muhammedan interests would be strongly represented;"[59] and (2) that in Bengal the seventeen million Bengali speakers would be outnumbered by thirty-seven million speakers of other languages—Bihari and Oriya. The large and homogeneous community of 41.5 million Bengali speaking people was thus to be dismembered and rendered impotent.

By the end of September 1904 the discussions between the Government of India and Bengal had finalized the scheme. No inkling of the contemplated arrangements was given to the public. However, from some news published in the Anglo-Indian press it was surmised that something unpleasant was brewing. Articles appeared in the Indian press expressing alarm. Questions were put in the Legislature to elicit information which was withheld.

Curzon was away in England from 10 April to 9 December 1904. On his return he took up the consideration of the question in right earnest. Risley, the Home Secretary, had drafted his note and explained the virtues of the Machiavellian plan. Some of them may be narrated in his own words. He wrote:

"Bengal united is a power, Bengal divided will pull in several different ways. That is what the Congress leaders feel; their apprehensions are perfectly correct and they form one of the greatest merits of the scheme."

Again, "one of our main objects is to split up and thereby weaken a solid body of opponents to our rule."

About the Congress he noted :

"This organisation is controlled by a clique of Congress wirepullers. Their constant effort (hitherto defeated mainly by the influence of the Dacca Nawab) has been to induce the leading Muhammedans to submit to their influence.... From every point of view it is desirable to encourage the growth of local centres of opinion. If the numerous preponderance of Bengali Hindu is reduced by dividing up the province, it may be expected that such centres will arise among the Muhammedans at Dacca, among the natives of Behar and among the Oriyas at Cuttack and that it will be no longer possible for a small knot of men at Calcutta to manipulate public opinion throughout the whole of Bengal."[60]

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[59] Home Dept. Public A, February 1905, Nos. 155-167; Risley to Chief Secretary, Bengal, 13 Sept. 1904.

[60] *Ibid.*, Risley's Minute, 6 December 1904 and Govt. of India's letter to Bengal Government.

Curzon sent the proposals to the Secretary of State on 2 February 1905. The latter pointed out the unreasonableness of the proposal to transfer three-fifths of the members of a homogeneous community to a new administration with a distant capital, and regarded the tendency to undervalue the strength and substance of the public sentiment as surprising. Nevertheless the Secretary of State gave in to the Viceroy disregarding all the protests, resolutions and memorials, as well as alternative schemes. Curzon sardonically observed later, "the measure had been thrown as a sop to soothe my wounded feelings rather than on grounds of political propriety or expediency."[61]

The approval of the Secretary of State was given on 9 June 1905, but was disclosed in the House of Commons in July . Then twelve days later the Resolution of the Government made known the details of the Partition. On September 1st the Royal Proclamation communicated the assent of the King and informed the public that the reorganisation would come into force on 16 October 1905.

If the first scheme chastised the turbulent and sedition-mongering Bengalis—a solid body of opponents of British rule with whips, the second one did so with scorpions. The iniquitous purpose entertained by the Government of India, concurred in by the Home Government in England and accepted by the British Parliament may be best described in the verse of Tennyson[62] :

It is the little rift within the lute,
That by and by will make the music mute,
And ever widening slowly silence all.

The little rift did widen till it broke India into two. It not only destroyed the solidarity of Bengal which was the immediate aim of the Congress, but eventually that of India also.

Announcement of Partition

The announcement in the House of Commons was flashed to India and appeared in the press on 6th July. It triggered a tremendous explosion. Feelings were already on edge, it was suspected that Government was engaged in secret confabulations concerning the fate of Bengal; the Universities' Act of March 1904 had caused widespread resentment among the educated class; the convocation speech of Curzon on 11 February 1905 had stoked the fires of discontent, and the Partition proved the proverbial straw which broke the camel's back.

Thus, on the eve of the Partition, India was smarting under a sense in which humiliation, frustration, bitterness and anger were combined.

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[61] Lord Curzon in the House of Lords, 30 June 1908, quoted by Nevinson H. W., *The New Spirit in India.* p. 13, *note.*

[62] Tennyson, Alfred, Lord, *Merlin and Vivien, Idylls of the King*, Vol. III., p. 197.

A gradual change had been coming over the Indian temper. Men like Tilak, Aurobindo Ghose, Tagore, were expressing dissatisfaction with the political methods of the older statesmen who guided the Congress.

The general stir visible all over Asia had its repercussions in India. The awe and prestige of Imperialist Britain were losing their impressiveness. The Irish affairs—the boycott agitation, the Parnellite manoeuvres to win Home Rule, and the Sinn Fein movement—exhibited the vulnerability of British occupation. The earlier defeats in the South African War exposed the weaknesses of the British military organisation. The rise of Japan, Britain's eagerness to conclude a treaty with her and her amazing victories over a mighty European power like Russia thrilled India and raised her morale. The revolutionary stirrings in Russia, north Africa, Persia, the Near East and China had their echoes in India. Investigators of India's past revealed her achievements in philosophy, science, arts and administration and increased self-confidence. The educated class was now more numerous, more politically conscious, better organised and therefore better prepared to accept the challenge of Curzonian imperialism.

The voices which during the 19th century had been mild and intermittent suddenly became clamant and continuous. The first effect of the announcement of the Partition was one of painful surprise. The reason was that "the revised scheme was conceived in secret, discussed in secret, and settled in secret, without the slightest hint to the public."[63]

Criticism of the Scheme of Partition

(i) *British.*—The indignation was almost universal. The *London Times* wrote, "it is impossible not to sympathize with the repugnance of their (Bengalis') leaders from arrangements which thus divided them under two separate governments." The *Manchester Guardian* remarked, "it is hard to explain, though it is still harder to excuse, his (Curzon's) support of the scheme for cutting Bengal into pieces." It noticed the bitter complaint of the secrecy and silence of the Government of India in the matter, and said, "We should like to think that even now it is not too late to devise an innovation....that gives equal offence to all Bengalees, whether it leaves them in or drops them out of Bengal." The *Daily News* noted, "the feelings of Bengal have been deeply stirred, however, by the Viceroy's present intermeddling, and the British public if it consents to devote its mind to the greatest of our dependencies, will require a very full vindication of the new scheme." The *Standard* found "a solid case of sincere protest" below all the exaggeration, and observed, "Europeans joined with natives in dissenting from the scheme, and the most loyal and conservative Muhammedan noblemen condemned it as unreservedly as the least responsible of a vernacular broadsheet."[64]

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[63] Banerjea, S. N., *A Nation in Making* (1963), p. 172.

(ii) *Anglo-Indian.*—The *Statesman* of 8th July indicted the Government in these words: "The Government is very seriously to blame for the sustained secrecy and disingenuousness that has marked the progress of the affair ever since Lord Curzon's tour in East Bengal....The truth is that the partition scheme has been matured in a manner which suggests the processes of that "Oriental Diplomacy" which formed the text of a famous public discourse (the Convocation Address of Curzon). It reveals also an incredible amount of official bungling. There can be little doubt that the opposition, reality of which is admitted in the Resolution, might have been lessened, if not entirely prevented, by the adoption of a less tortuous and distrustful policy, and by the display of an honest attempt to consider the permanent lines of racial and linguistic demarcation in the province."

The *Pioneer* echoed the opinion of the *Statesman*. The *Englishman* of Calcutta discussed whether the agitation of the Bengalis was artificial and opined : "We think that on the whole those who know something of the Bengali character will come to the conclusion that the partition scheme has really caused distress of mind amongst the protestants." It also expressed the apprehension that the Partition might lead to the limiting of the powers of the High Court and confining its jurisdiction, which "should meet with the keenest opposition from the non-official class in every community. ....It is no longer absurd to credit Government with a design to take every means to consolidate the arbitrary powers which it possesses."

It added, "for several years past an uneasy suspicion has been growing up amongst the non-official European class that a reactionary spirit prevails in the circle which has in its power to control the constitutional form of Government in India."

Morley, who became the Secretary of State for India in December 1905, admitted in the Parliamentary debate : "I am bound to say that nothing was ever worse done so far as the disregard which was shown to the feeling and opinion of the people concerned." He recognised, "the final scheme, in which all these competitive efforts were summed up, was never submitted to the judgement of any body in Bengal. ..I think that is a matter which no defender of the late Government will really stand up for."[65]

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[64] Quoted by Mukherji P., *All about Partition*, Calcutta, 1906.

[65] Morley, J., *Speeches on Indian Affairs*, pp. 110-111, speech in the House of Commons, 26 February 1906.

Lord Kitchener condemned the Partition of Bengal in unequivocal language, 'though he was Member of Council when the evil deed was done'. He declared that the Government "should have no real peace nor conciliation until some sort of action had been taken in the direction of a United Bengal"[66].

To the profound surprise of the Secretary of State, Fuller who had been implementing the Partition , confessed that 'he had opposed the present form of Partition."[67]

Such being the judgement of an important section of the British press in England, the pro-British press in India, and the highest authority in the Government of India, it should not be difficult to understand the depth of feeling of those who were the victims of the outrageous plan of Partition. In the early stages of the agitation almost all sections of Indians joined in the protest, later the majority of Muslims especially in the new province of East Bengal realising the benefits it secured for the community, turned against the anti-partition movement and pledged their support to the Government.

(iii) *Indian Criticism.*—Those who realized the mischief of the Partition and were offended by the contemptuous high-handedness of Government were divided into two main groups.

One was the group which desired to follow the familiar method of persuasion by submitting to Government well argued petitions and memoranda on behalf of political bodies and the general public and by appealing to the fair sense of the rulers in India and England. This method was based on faith in the democratic traditions of England and belief in British justice. The older group of Congress leaders set great store by this method, especially after December 1905, when the Liberal Party came into power in England and the radical thinker John Morley assumed the office of the Secretary of State for India. Between Gokhale, the leader of the cautious group, and Morley, there grew up a curious relationship. Gokhale trusting in Morley's liberalism expected from him a genuine advance in the status of Indians in the Government of India and therefore opposed and discouraged all manifestations of impatience and active resistance. Morley anxious to destroy the increasing influence of the dynamic school of politicians wished to rally Gokhale's party by concessions which conceded no real power.

The second group considered the method of appeals and petitions undignified, in fact a form of mendicancy. They believed in a dual attack upon the fortress of British obstinacy. One line of attack was to rouse patriotism, love of freedom and hatred of foreign domination, and to foster the spirit of resistance, self-reliance, sacrifice and suffering.

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[66] *Morely Papers*: Morely to Minto, Vol. V, 5 May 1910 Kitchener's conversation.

[67] *Ibid.*, Morley to Minto, Vol. I., 5 October 1906.

Its means were propaganda—meetings, processions, demonstrations associations, and defiance of authority. The propaganda was to be carried on by word of mouth, by speeches, by writings in the press and by pamphlets. The aim was to revolutionize the mind from argument to action, from docile obedience to alien authority to free determination in disregard of consequences, a temper which is the condition precedent to political independence.

The second line was to offer organised opposition and resistance in the field of economy, administration and government, with a view to transfering as much of governmental function into the hands of the people as possible, till government was almost wholly emptied of its authority. The planks in this programme were Swadeshi, Boycott, National Education, Swaraj and the ultimate sanction for them, passive resistance.

There emerged a third group also. They argued that British rule in India was founded on force. Did not Englishmen remind Indians again and again that India had been conquered by the sword and was held by the sword? Minto remonstrating against Morley's insistence upon reforms, told him; "But when you say that 'if reforms do not save the Raj, nothing else will', I am afraid I must utterly disagree. The Raj will not disappear in India as long as the British race remains what it is, because we shall fight for the Raj as hard as we have ever fought..and we shall win as we have always won."[68] And they asked which country in world history had shaken off the yoke of foreigners without resort to force. India's independence could only come through countering British armed might with organised but necessarily secret violence.

Sir William Molesworth had pointed out many years ago: "Where, however, responsibility was wanting,' the experience of all ages, had proved that abuses would exist, and continue to exist, unredressed until at last they reached that amount which induced the people no longer to trust to prayer and humble petition, but raise the cry of war, and have recourse to arms."[69]

The second group agreed with Tagore that the susceptibilities of India had been cruelly outraged by Britain. He accused Government for disregarding Indian feelings, "for every single individual in the country of No-nation (India) is completely in the grip of a whole nation (Britain)—whose tireless vigilance being the vigilance of a machine has not the human power to overlook or to discriminate."[70] He held "the desolating despair of the haunted world of suffering man possessed by the ghastly abstraction of the organising man."[71] was the state of India.

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[68] Wolpert, S., *Morley and India*, p. 46, Minto to Morley, 27 May 1908.

[69] Molesworth, Sir William, House of Commons, 23 January 1838, The Canada Debate of 1838.

[70] Tagore, Rabindranath, *Nationalism*, p. 25.

[71] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ANTI-PARTITION AGITATION

I. The First Phase

The year 1905 was one of unrelieved tragedy—the tragedy of the dismemberment of Bengal. The year 1904 had ended with the resolution of the Congress recording its emphatic protest against the proposal of the Government of India for the Partition. As the year progressed and the scheme was revealed by stages, the tragic drama unrolled itself.

The plot was furnished by the clash of the two wills-- the will of imperial Britain on the one side and the will of the Indian people on the other. In the earlier stages the tempo was slow. On 10 January 1905, at a large gathering in the Town Hall of Calcutta, Curzon's proposal was denounced and alternative schemes were suggested which while preserving the solidarity of the Bengalis would diminish the burden of the administration. Another meeting followed on 10 March to register the people's strong disapprobation of Curzon's Convocation speech and his general attitude towards Indian matters. Protest meetings were held in other parts of India too.

The agitation became stormier with the disclosure that the Secretary of State had approved the plan submitted by the Government of India. The news produced a terrible shock and gave powerful impetus to agitation. A memorandum signed by thousands of people was sent to the Secretary of State on 6 July 1905[1]; it was followed by other memorials. Public meetings were convened immediately in Calcutta and the towns in the province to remonstrate against the decision. At a meeting at Bagerhat the suggestion of the *Sanjivani* and a resolution in favour of the boycott of British goods were adopted.

The publication of the Government Resolution giving the details of the reorganisation plan added fuel to the fire. The picture of the future in all its horror was now presented to the country. A tearing and raging agitation followed in which the whole of Bengal—east and west, participated. All sections of Indians irrespective of age, profession and religion joined in condemning the Partition. Meetings, processions and demonstrations were held all over the province.

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[1] Ray, P.C., *The Case against the Breakup of Bengal* (1905), Appendix.

One of the highlights of this activity was the meeting on the 7th of August in the Town Hall of Calcutta. A vast multitude gathered, most of the shops in the city were closed, five thousand students marched to the Hall. The crowd was so large that two separate overflow meetings had to be arranged outside. The excitement was intense, slogans and shouts of *Bande Mataram* rent the air, pennons bearing the phrase "No Partition", and flags inscribed with mottoes like "United Bengal", and "Unity is strength" waved over the heads of the assembled crowd. Hand-bills and pamphlets were distributed and black bands as token of mourning, tied round the arms. Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandi of Qasimbazar, Bhupendra Nath Basu and Ambika Charan Mazumdar presided over the three meetings. Apart from the other resolutions, it was resolved "to abstain from the purchase of British manufactures so long as the Partition Resolution is not withdrawn."

A new chapter had opened in the history of India, as Ambika Charan Mazumdar declared, "With the partition of Bengal political agitation in this country enters upon a new phase. It has unmistakably demonstrated two things; first, the resolute despotism of the Government, and secondly, the utter futility of the kind of agitation to which we have grown accustomed". He added, "We must now transfer our ideas from the sphere of thought to the sphere of action. We must practise self-respect in order to command respect from those who have learnt to treat us with contempt."[2]

India had turned a new leaf, the era of active and aggressive agitation had begun and the message of India's new spirit of self-reliance was carried to the masses.

Every day the pitch of fervour increased. Resolutions on Swadeshi and Boycott were enthusiastically adopted. The movement extended beyond the frontiers of Bengal. The United Provinces, Panjab, Maharashtra and other parts of India began to stir. Calcutta remained the centre of the hectic activity all over the country and gave the lead in the formulation of programmes and prescribing methods of agitation.

In a meeting on the 22nd September attended by persons of all communities and all classes where Lal Mohan Ghosh, Motilal Ghose, Bhupendra Nath Basu, Bipin Chandra Pal, Hirendra Nath Datta addressed the audience, a fund was opened in aid of the movement. This meeting was followed by the first repressive measure of Government *viz.*, the prohibition of meetings in Calcutta in the Maidan.

The next day, 23 September, a meeting of Muslims was held at Raja Bazar over which Abdul Rasul presided. It expressed its sympathy and support to the agitation against the partition and its whole-hearted approval of the Swadeshi movement.

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[2] Mukherjea, P., *All about Partition* (Calcutta, 1906).

On the occasion of the Mahalaya festival on the 28th September, a ceremonial worship was held at the Kalighat temple in Calcutta. At the end the assembled worshippers took the pledge in the presence of Kali, the Mother, "I will not use foreign-made goods as far as practicable, I will not buy at foreign merchants' shops articles that are available at the shop of the people of this country, and I will not get anything done by a foreigner which can be done by a countryman of mine."[3] The vow was repeated in Kali temples all over Bengal.

On 16th October—the day on which Partition was effected and Bampfylde Fuller took over charge as the Lieutenant Governor of the new province, a demonstration of a unique type, a manifestation of intense indignation against the flagrant violation of public sentiment was held. Its programme was drawn up to mark the day as one of solemn resolve and deep mourning. It started in the morning with a bath in the Ganga.

Band after band of bare-footed men moved towards the ghats, singing hymns and national songs and shouting *Bande Mataram*. They took their dip in the Ganga and tied *Rakhi* bands round the arms to bind all in one brotherhood. They fasted during the day, lit no fires to cook. In the afternoon the people gathered at the ceremony of laying the foundation of the Federation Hall—a symbol of the unity of all Bengalis. Most of the prominent leaders of Bengal were present at the function, for example, Gurudas Banerjee, the eminent jurist and educationist, Surendranath Banerjea, the uncrowned King of Bengal, Nilratan Sarkar, a leading physician, Motilal Ghose, the editor of the redoubtable *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* Rabindranath Tagore, the poet, Abul Hasan Ghaznavi, Leakat Husain. Anand Mohan Bose occupied the chair and laid the foundation stone.

A proclamation was read pledging the people to do everything in their power to counteract the evil effects of the dismemberment of the province and to maintain the integrity of the Bengali people.

Then the vast concourse walked through the streets of Calcutta to Bagh Bazar where it was addressed by Surendranath Banerjea. After the speech a collection was made and Rs. 50,000 were contributed to form the nucleus of the National Fund.

"From December 1903 to October 1905 over 2,000 public meetings attended by 500 to 50,000 people were held in the two parts of Bengal at which Hindus and Mohamedans with equal zeal and earnestness joined in the protest."[4]

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[3] Home Deptt. Public A, Progs. June 1906, No. 177; and Home Deptt. Political A, Progs. October 1907, Nos. 50—60.

[4] Mazumdar, A.C., *Indian National Evolution* (G.A. Natesan, November 1971 2nd edition), p. 205.

Thus far the public movement had progressed fast and spread over the whole of Bengal. It had not met with any serious obstruction from the Government. It had begun as a movement of protest against Partition. By the middle of October it had broadened its nature and scope. It had inspired in the people a spirit of self-reliance and refusal to obey the arbitrary decisions of authorities. It had given impetus to the development of organised activity. It deepened the feeling of patriotic dedication and spread national consciousness on a very wide scale.

Now a constructive programme was evolved consisting of Swadeshi, Boycott and national education, and aspiring towards the goal of Swaraj. The movement was also tending in the direction of polarization of political views.

Leaders of Agitation

The astonishing speed with which it advanced was due to a number of factors. Bengal was fortunate in producing a large number of capable leaders. There were in Calcutta and in the districts during these stormy days many men of exalted integrity and moral virtue, of high intellectual calibre, of excellent organising ability, men of great courage, steadfastness, eloquence, men of passionate and fervent devotion to the motherland. The list is long but some may be mentioned—Gurudas Banerji, Surendranath Banerjea, Rabindranath Tagore, Satish Chandra Mukherji, Motilal Ghose, Ananda Mohan Bose, Romesh Chandra Dutt, Bipin Chandra Pal, Aswini Kumar Dutt, Ambika Charan Mazumdar and K. K. Mitra.

Associations

Then there were many societies which promoted the various activities under the fourfold programme. The old associations like the British India Association and the Landholders' Association submitted memorials arguing the undesirability of the Partition and suggesting alternative arrangements and discussed the question of national education. New associations sprang up which zealously took up the constructive programme, organised volunteers to advance the cause of Swadeshi and boycott and to devise ways and means of establishing educational institutions. Among such associations were the Dawn Society founded by Satish Chandra Mukherjee, *Bande Mataram Sampradaya*, the anti-Circular Society, the Swadeshi Samaj and numerous others in Calcutta and in the mofussil. They vigorously carried on agitation, through meetings, processions, picketing and collecting funds. Volunteers mainly recruited from students took a prominent part in these activities. The Swadeshi movement found supporters in all classes of society, from princely landlords and merchants to humble workers like washermen and barbers, even the Sannyasis. Cheap sale shops of Swadeshi goods were opened.

Press

Besides what the individuals and organisations achieved the contribution of the press was outstanding. Both the Indian edited English papers and the Bengali language journals shared in making the movement successful.

The *Bengalee* edited by Surendranath Banerjea and the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* under Motilal Ghose were two of the most fearless critics of Government. Bengali papers like *Sanjivani, Hitavadi, Basumati* and others in Calcutta and *Charu Mihir* of Mymensingh, *Hitaishi* of Khulna, *Dacca Prakash* of Dacca and a number of others published in the districts attacked governmental measures with even greater severity. The *Sandhya* edited by Brahma Bandhab Upadhyaya was among the most outspoken. The Bengali papers had wide circulation among people who did not know English and their influence in spreading anti-British opinion was large.

It was the *Sanjivani* conducted by K. K. Mitra which was the first to announce the Secretary of State's decision concerning Partition on 6 July 1905. A week later, 13 July 1905, it called upon the Bengalis to give up the use of English-made articles and thus inaugurated the boycott movement. The *Bengalee* of Surendranath Banerjea immediately followed warning the Government, "but let not the Government lay the flattering function to its soul that the country will acquiesce in these monstrous proceedings without a strenuous and persistent struggle in which no expense or sacrifice will be grudged."[5] It arraigned the Government for "the crowning monument of the most reactionary epoch in British rule" and announced "We are resolved to wage a ceaseless war with the constitutional means at our disposal."[6]

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* wrote, "never were the sentiments of a nation, consisting of not of thousands, or tens of thousands, or hundreds of thousands but tens of millions were outraged so wantonly as in the case of the partition of Bengal."[7]

The *Hitavadi* (22 September 1905) stated, "Lord Curzon has instilled a new life into the Indians by putting them to a fiery ordeal."[8] It added, "We must tread the rugged path of duty with nothing but our strength to support us, else our ruin is certain."[9]

Articles in this strain were published in all Indian papers. At the same time numerous pamphlets denouncing the Government made their appearance and were widely distributed through the Bar associations of the districts. Two of them, "Who is our King" (*Amader Raja Ke*) and "Golden Bengal" (*Sonar Bangla*) were very effective. The first questioned the right of the British to rule India. "It is our blood they (the British) are sucking ; it is our money on which they are fattening. Why should we submit to these unjust rulers?" The second exhorted the people of Bengal "to stand united and tear into pieces the nest of the *feringhee* bulbuls and throw it into the Ganges."[10]

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[5] *Bengalee,* 7th July 1905.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 7 July 1905.

[8] *Report on the Native Newspapers, Bengal* 1905.

[9] *Ibid.*

The main instruments of the Swadeshi and Boycott propaganda and the most enthusiastic supporters of the agitation were the youth of Bengal.

The Movement Spreads

The year 1905 was coming to a close as repression mounted and the tribulations of the people aggravated. But the courage with which Bengal faced its trial stirred the whole of India. The Bombay Presidency and the Central Provinces found in Bal Gangadhar Tilak a supremely cool, determined and intrepid leader of unusual organising ability. He had defied the Government before and earned its hostility. He threw himself into the struggle thrust upon the country by the Viceroy's antics, and grasped with both hands the opportunity to build up an all-India movement of resistance.

He sounded the call in an article in the *Kesari* headed "The Crisis Arrives"[11], and followed it up with vigorous propaganda in favour of Boycott. He declared, "the time has come to demand Swaraj or self-government. No piecemeal reform will do. The system of present administration is ruinous to the country. It must mend or end". But the only effective means open to a disarmed and helpless country were the practice of boycott. Tilak, Paranjpe, editor of *Kal,* and their friends, organised meetings all over the Bombay Presidency and the Central Provinces to popularise Swadeshi and enforce boycott. The Bengalis in these regions were their most zealous supporters.

In the Panjab, the Arya Samaj took a prominent part in preaching the Swadeshi doctrine. Arya Samaj preachers went round the country rousing interest in indigenous goods.

The United Provinces bestirred themselves and Swadeshi propaganda was extended from district to district. Meetings were held and Swadeshi stores were opened in many towns.

In the south the movement affected almost all the districts but was not as vigorous as in northern and western India. Nevertheless, every part of India was involved and for the first time in British Indian history the whole country was united in a common cause.

The Partition of Bengal acted as the catalytic agent which precipitated the slow developing process of anti-British sentiment. World events, e. g., the Russo-Japanese War, the worsening economic conditions in

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[10] Home Deptt., Public A, Progs. June 1906, Nos. 169-186, enclosures.

[11] *Kesari,* 25 August 1905.

India and the haughty apathy of the British were the predisposing causes of the disillusionment which was growing during the closing years of the nineteenth century.

The Partition and the Indian National Congress

The Government was aware of the brewing of discontent and distrust. In 1898, the Secretary of State for India, George Hamilton, was informed by the Viceroy, "the poison of discontent is spreading rapidly,.. ....The sedition is now among the ryots[12]". Hamilton wrote back, "I fear trouble of the worst character"[13].

Curzon's utter contempt for Indian sentiment and mischievous measures to disrupt the progress of the national movement provided the match to the magazine which was filled up with powder.

In these circumstances the sole organ of the Indian political movement, the Indian National Congress, could not remain unaffected by the change in the Indian feeling.

Already the distant roar of the approaching thunder was audible. Writing about Hume's message to Congress (1903), Tilak remarked, "If constitutional political agitation was the real way to our progress then it must bear fruit, if not, we shall have to abandon this way and follow some other, more beneficial"[14]. The Congress adopted a resolution in Madras expressing its deep concern at the policy of the Government of India in breaking up the territorial integrity of Bengal. During the year 1904, the thunder was coming nearer.

When the first scheme of the partition became known agitation in Bengal began to boil. But during 1904, the public was kept completely ignorant of Government plans and therefore there was a lull in public activities. But protests continued to be made, for instance, on 28 March 1904, a meeting was held in the Town Hall of Calcutta with Raja Pearey Mohan Mukherjee in the chair to express disapproval of the scheme of reorganisation of the provinces.

Henry Cotton strongly criticised the Government in an article in the *Manchester Guardian* on 5 April 1904. In the Bengal Legislative Assembly Indian members vainly pressed Government for information. Apprehensions were simmering in the minds when the Indian National Congress met in Bombay in December 1904 under the chairmanship of Henry Cotton.

Cotton defined the goal of India in these words : "The ideal of an Indian patriot is the establishment of a federation of free and separate States, the United States of India, placed on a fraternal footing with the self-governing colonies, each with its own autonomy, cemented together under the aegis of Great Britain."[15]

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[12] *Hamilton Papers*, H.E.M. James to Hamilton, enclosed in Hamilton to Elgin, 21 January 1898.

[13] *Ibid.*,

[14] *Tilakanche Kesaritil Lekha* Vol. II, p. 485.

The proposal to "break up Bengal against the loudly expressed wishes and sentiments of the Bengali people can only be described as the most arbitrary and unsympathetic evidence of irresponsible and autocratic statesmanship."[16]

During 1905 when the Partition was executed the country shook with agonized frenzy. In the eruption, the old faith in British justice and good intentions towards India, became submerged. The constitutional methods of removal of grievances lost their appeal and new ways of bringing pressure upon Government became popular. Swadeshi and Boycott were adopted as the new weapons. Defiance of Government's orders and development of independent institutions replaced old ways of meek obedience and dependence on Government's favours. The year saw the beginning of a strenuous struggle between the self-assertion of the people on the one side and the attempt to suppress them on the other.

Nevinson noticing the rise of the new spirit in India. puthis finger on the spot. He observed, "By the Anglo-Indians its (Congress's) constitutional propriety was called cowardice, its resolutions remained unnoticed, its grievances unredressed, and the representative of the crown refused to receive its deputation"[17]. In his judgement, "it had no influence upon the action of the Indian Government, and no influence upon English opinion at home", which flatly contradicted Pherozeshah Mehta's assertions of Congress achievements.[18]

The Partition had given a fillip to dissatisfaction. It was inevitable that resentment against Curzon's administration should hover like a dark cloud over the Congress which met at Banaras under Gokhale's presidentship. The proceedings were stormy, the old perfunctory unanimity which had characterized the deliberations and decisions was no more. Even the resolution for extending welcome to the Prince of Wales was opposed. But its main achievement was to pass two resolutions ; one, to record its emphatic protest against the Partition of Bengal in the face of the strongest opposition on the part of the people of the Province; and the second, to protest against the repressive measures "which have been adopted by the authorities in Bengal after the people there had been compelled to resort to the boycott of foreign goods as a last protest, and perhaps the only constitutional and effective means left to them of drawing the attention of the British public[19]".

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[15] Cotton, Sir Henry, Presidential Address, Twentieth Congress, Bombay. 1904. *The Indian National Congress*, (Natesan), p. 773.

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 783-84.

[17] Nevinson, H.W., *The New spirit in India*, pp. 326-27.

[18] Mehta, Pherozeshah, Address at the Bombay Session of the Indian National Congress, 1904, as Chairman of the Reception Committee.

The approval of the Congress for the boycott of British cloth signalised the wind of change in the country. The years following witnessed the beginning of the revolutionary movement in the land.

Moderate Indian opinion was expressed by Pherozeshah Mehta and Gokhale. According to the first; "Rightly or wrongly, we believe that these measures are calculated to upset and revolutionize, or to use a more classic phrase, to break the continuity of that policy of righteousness which was never so openly denied to be the declared and unalterable policy of the Crown for the good government of this country as during Lord Curzon's administration."[20]

Gokhale opined, "He (Curzon) has no sympathy with popular aspirations and when he finds them among a subject people he thinks he is rendering their country a service by trying to put them down."[21]

Government Repression

The first reaction of the Indian Government was one of playing down the agitation because they did not wish to produce alarm in England. Its measures before 16 October were somewhat restrained. But as the movement spread, Swadeshi and Boycott began to be effective, and the attacks on Government became more fierce, the policy changed. A spate of repressive measures on the one hand and a resolute effort to wean the Muslims from the agitation on the other was launched.

Government's heavy hand fell on schools and colleges. Even before Bampfylde Fuller had actually assumed charge, Carlyle, the officiating Chief Secretary of Bengal had issued a confidential circular to all district magistrates on 10 October 1905 which threatened the stoppage of grants-in-aid, the enrolment of teachers and members of school committees as special constables, and the disaffiliation by the university if schools did not prevent pupils from participating in agitation in general and the boycott activity in particular.[22].

On the day he was installed, 16 October, Fuller published his first circular calling upon district authorities to furnish names of prominent residents taking a leading part in the agitation. A second one came on 8th November warning school authorities of dire consequences and students of disqualification for government service if they indulged in politics. Another order dated 8th November prohibited the shouting of

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[19] Indian National Congress, 1905,—Resolutions Nos. XII and XIII, see *Indian National Congress* (Natesan), Part II, pp. 118.-19.

[20] Mody, Home, *Sir Pherozeshah Mehta*, Vol. II, p. 484.

[21] Gokhale, G.K., Presidential Address, 1905. See *The Indian National Congress* (Madras, Natesan, 1917). p. 792.

[22] Carlyle circular dated 10 October 1905. Home Deptt. Public A, Progs. une 1906, Nos. 169-186.

Bande Mataram in streets and public places, and bringing out even *Sankirtan* (devotional) parties. An order declared the use of compulsion for buying only countrymade goods an offence[23].

As if these ukases were not adequate, more frightful measures were taken. On 15th November, a Gurkha military police company was moved into Barisal. Later the Gurkhas were sent to other districts also. 326 boys from Rangpur, Dacca and Noakhali and other high schools attending Swadeshi meetings were fined or expelled. The pupils of Madaripur school who had a scuffle with an European employee were ordered to be flogged. Similar outrageous commands were promulgated in the districts of Mymensingh, Serajganj (Dacca), Gar Bhowanipur and Howrah. The atrocities committed by the Gurkhas were noticed by the correspondent of the Anglo-Indian paper, the *Statesman*. It wrote, "there is no denying that their (Gurkhas') presence has struck terror into the minds of the Hindu population"[24].

The *Amrit Bazar Patrika* commenting on the brutal incidents in the various districts of East Bengal, wrote that police rule had practically supplanted the reign of law and order in the province[25]. The *Manchester Guardian* remarked, "It is doubtful if Russia can afford a parallel to this pettifogging tyranny"[26].

In order to rouse the Muslims against the anti-partition movement, Fuller undertook a tour of the province in November. He scolded everywhere those who were helping in the promotion of Swadeshi, and threatened them with ruinous consequences if they persisted in their activities[27]. The popular leader of Barisal, Aswini Kumar Dutt, was told to withdraw the proclamation against the sale of foreign cloth on pain of being bound down[28].

In one of his interviews the Lt. Governor of the new province is reported to have remarked that of his two wives, the Mohammedan one was the favourite[29]. He promised to the Muslims specially favourable treatment in government service and expressed his determination to protect them from harassment and intimidation at the hands of Swadeshi volunteers.

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[23] Home Deptt. Public A, Progs., June 1906, Nos. 169-186.

[24] *Statesman*, 2 December 1905. Cited in Haridas Mukherjee, and Uma Mukherjee, *India's Fight for Freedom*, p. 117.

[25] *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 23 December 1905.

[26] *Manchester Guardian*, 10 January 1906, quoted in Haridas Mukherjee and Uma Mukherjee, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

[27] Home Deptt. Public A, Progs. June 1906, No. 169. Telegram from Mazumdar and Chaudhari to Private Secretary to Viceroy, 18 November 1905.

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] Nevinson, H.W., *op. cit.*, p. 192. Chief Secretary Lyon's letter of 21 February 1906 contains an oblique reference to the remark.

In another town in December, the Lt. Governor desirous of impressing people with the might and majesty of Government allowed the police and magistracy to wreak their will by indiscriminate assaults on the people and by heaping indignities on respectable men[30]

II. The Second Phase (1906-08)

The New Rulers

Soon after in December 1905, Brodrick, the Conservative Secretary of State, was replaced by John Morley, the Liberal. Minto, the Scottish laird, the lover of sports and horse-racing, the adventure-pursuing soldier, followed Curzon, the brilliant intellectual who resigned his post because the Secretary of State supported Kitchener, the Commander-in-Chief, against the Governor-General. No scholar, Minto was a shrewd, practical-minded, easy-going administrator whose aristocratic connections were an asset to him in his dealings with the Liberal Secretary of State.

John Morley, the Secretary of State for India, was a man of enormous learning. He was a pacificist and a radical, vain, egotistical, fussy, but pliable. He was admired and almost adored by many educated Indians, but whether they were justified in hitching their wagon to the new star is doubtful.

Morley's formula for governing India was—'unfaltering repression on the one hand, and vigour and good faith in reform on the other'. He pointed out that unlike Lord Curzon who belonged to the school which believed that efficiency was the main end of British rule, he, while not neglecting efficiency, looked also to what was called political concessions[31]. In other words, he considered a judicious admixture of the carrot with the stick as more effective than the stick by itself alone.

The immediate problem which confronted Morley and Minto was the growing menace of the Indian unrest. Morley recognised that the Partition had gone "wholly and decisively against the wishes of most of the people concerned." He also differed from the theory that the agitation was the work of a handful of wire-pullers and agitators. But he considered "the redistribution of Bengal is now a settled fact,...and that it would be very unreasonable to ask the Government to start afresh to redistribute the areas"[32].

So far as Minto was concerned, he lost no time in forming his opinion regarding the Indian situation. He early established contacts with moderate Congress leaders and discussed the problem with the officials and arrived at certain conclusions. He considered it dangerous to import into India English political institutions. But he agreed that the loyal educated Indian class was entitled to "a greater share in the Government of India", for if it was ignored "we shall drive it into the arms of the Congress leaders". He was even prepared to consider greater association of Indians with Government. But he refused to revoke the wrong Curzon had done.

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[30] Haridas Mukherjee & Uma Mukherjee. *op. cit.*, p. 123. (extracts from *Bengalee* and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*)

[31] Morley, Viscount John, *Indian Speeches* (1907-9), p. 121.

[32] Morley's speech in the House of Commons, February 26, 1906. *H.C.Debates*, 4th Series, Vol. 152, col. 844.

Government Repression (1906)

Minto brought into operation the policy of repression-cum-concession. The Secretary of State and the Governor-General agreed that the influence of the forward group in the Congress ought not to be allowed to increase. Minto's opinion about the Congress was somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand, he was convinced that the Congress represented that section of the Indian people who did not possess the grit to play a leading part in the Government; yet he did not want to ignore its existence, for it was a factor in the affairs of the country.

In other words, the educated class which was represented by the Congress, was unfit for self-government, but it was useful as an advisory body. Minto looked upon Gokhale as the most acceptable type of Congressman, though his ideas and ambitions were unrealistic. He divided Congressmen in two categories—loyal and seditious. The first were to be conciliated by favours and the second suppressed by force.

Nor did Morley like the Congress. He had learnt from the Prince of Wales who toured India in the winter of 1905-6, that it was becoming a great power for evil. He desired to make it a power for good with the assistance of Minto and the cooperation of the Moderates.

Thus the year 1906 opened with weapons ready to deal with unrest. Bampfylde Fuller's wicked policy of terrorising the political movement and its workers and inciting the Muslims against the Hindus was already in full swing.

The boycott movement was treated as seditious, anti-British and anti-Muslim, and was sought to be suppressed by the police. The meetings of protest and propaganda were disallowed, orders were in force to stop shouting of *Bande Mataram*, and to prohibit students from attending meetings or joining processions.

The crowning act of victimization was the forcible dispersal of the Barisal Conference in April 1906. Barisal was the home town of Aswini Kumar Dutt who had made it a stronghold of Swadeshi and Boycott movement. The proposal that Barisal should be the venue of a political conference of delegates from Calcutta and other districts of the two Bengals alarmed the Government of East Bengal. It issued panicky orders prohibiting shouting of *Bande Mataram* and posted police along the route to disperse the procession of delegates. When the delegates started in procession, they were assaulted. Surendranath Banerjea was taken into custody, marched to the residence of the magistrate, and fined for protesting against the rudeness of the magistrate.

The Conference met in spite of police persecution. Resolutions were passed praising the brave conduct of the young members. A significant resolution was adopted to the effect that as Barisal was no longer under a constitutional government the Conference should concentrate only on problems connected with the Partition, Swadeshi and national progress, the success of which depended on popular effort[33].

The lathi charge on the delegates, the ill-treatment of eminent leaders and the break-up of the conference by force were extraordinary incidents which shook the whole country. The consequences were far-reaching.

Indian Reaction

A wave of indignation and defiance swept over the land. Numerous meetings were held to denounce the atrocious behaviour of Fuller and demand his recall. The more advanced leaders like Aswini Kumar Dutt, Bipin Chandra Pal, Brahma Bandhab Upadhyaya and Aurobindo Ghose shot into prominence and soon replaced the Moderates in the peoples' favour.

The policy of Fuller was denounced by all leaders. Gokhale charged Fuller with utter wrongheadedness and unfitness for the high position he occupied. He demanded "not only the officials on the spot be punished, but Fuller be removed from his post"[34].

Tilak wrote, "Banerjea's arrest, the treatment meted out to him and his sentence, only proved that Bengal was once more under the rule of Shaista Khan. Government orders which show little regard for popular opinion, are wanting in that moral force from which all laws are derived"[35].

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* represented to Minto, "the rulers of Eastern Bengal have lighted up a flame of discontent in the country which will not be allayed by brute force"[36]. *The Indian Mirror* called the incident "a wanton disregard for law and constitution"[37].

The extremist leaders, on the other hand, welcomed the policy of coercion and violence, because it disillusioned the people and awakened the spirit of self-respect and resistance. B. C. Pal wrote:

"The old faith of the people in the British Government as the saviour of this country is almost dead. And in proportion as they have been losing their faith in the foreign agencies at work among them, in that proportion they have been acquiring a new and intrepid faith in themselves"[38].

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[33] *Hitavadi*, 15 April 1906.

[34] Gokhale, G. K., *Speeches and Writings*, Vol. II. Speech of 5 May 1906, p. 3566.

[35] *Kesari*, 17 April 1906.

[36] *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 19 April 1906.

[37] *The Indian Mirror*, 19 April 1906.

[38] *Bande Mataram*, 1 October 1906.

Tagore expressed this feeling in verse:[39]

"The more they tighten their fetters, the more will our fetters snap;
The more their eyes redden, the more will our eyes open."

But the great event of the year was the emergence of Bal Gangadhar Tilak as the outstanding leader of India. Under his inspiration and in his presence the Shivaji Festival was celebrated in Calcutta on the 8th of June 1906. The large audience consisted of Hindus, Muslims and members of other communities, and Tagore's song about the Maratha hero was sung. Other districts followed the example of Calcutta with an enthusiasm surpassing Maharashtra. Bengal accepted Tilak as the leader of all India. His name was sponsored for the presidentship of the Congress of 1906. Lajpat Rai who was the leader of the Arya Samaj in Panjab, and Khaparde from Berar continued to strengthen and extend the influence of the new party. Vijairaghavachariar was the champion of the new school in the South.

Press

New journals and newspapers reflecting the new spirit and advocating the new methods of political action appeared. Among them was *Yugantar* in Bengali edited by Bhupendra Nath Dutt (brother of Swami Vivekananda), and Barindra Kumar Ghose (brother of Aurobindo Ghose), which cooperated with the *Sandhya* which Brahma Bandhab Upadhyaya founded in 1904, in rousing the will to revolt against foreign domination. But the appearance of *Bande Mataram* edited by Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghose from the 5th of August to the middle of December and then afterwards anonymously by Aurobindo Ghose was the most powerful addition to the national press.

In other parts of the country, too, papers with similar outlook were issued. The *Kesari* and *Mahartta* of Tilak and the *Panjabee* (Lahore) of Lala Lajpat Rai were already strongly supporting the new developments.

Labour

The general unrest in the country gave impetus to the labour movement which was still feeble. Since the early years of the century labour problems were drawing the attention of both the Government and the popular leaders. But their interests were contrary. The Government was anxious to protect British industry from the competition of the growing Indian industry, especially cotton textiles, which received an impetus from the Swadeshi movement later. The Indian leaders desired on the one hand to safeguard the interests of the Indian capitalists and on the other, to ameliorate the conditions of the Indian workers, especially employed under European capitalists. Hence there was an ambivalence in the attitude of the Indian leaders.

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[39] Pal B. C., *Swadeshi and Swaraj*, p. 161.

While they opposed labour legislation to reduce hours of work or employment of women in mills and other measures of improvement which affected the profits of the mill-owners, they protested strongly against labour conditions in the plantation industries—tea and jute.

However, the labour movement was making itself felt and growing apace. The leaders of the extremist movement took interest in it. Bipin Chandra Pal had as early as 1901 drawn attention to the condition of workers as "a matter of profound significance to the present economic problem of the country"[40]. C. Subramaniya Iyer wrote on labour problems in his book *Some Economic Aspects of British Rule in India* (1903). Satish Chandra Mukherjea, the founder of the Dawn Society and Magazine and an active leader of the agitation, made out a strong plea for the workers. He wrote, "the future of the ryot and artisan must always in my eyes look larger than any visions of glory, national or international, achieved at their expense"[41]

When the anti-partition agitation gained strength some of the Bengal leaders showed keen interest in the economic distress of labourers and peasants. The *Englishman* noted :

"Certain Bengal lawyers and others who have taken a prominent part in preaching boycott of British goods, are now employing their leisure hours in forming what they are pleased to call trade unions amongst the employees in large concerns managed by the Europeans. Particular attention is being paid to the jute mills around Calcutta"[42].

There were strikes among railwaymen, jute mills, textile mills, the government Press in Bengal. Then in 1905 and 1906 similar strikes occurred in the Bombay Presidency. In this region Tilak greatly sympathised with the struggle of the workers to obtain better conditions of work.

So far as plantation labour was concerned the Bengal leaders, for instance, B.C. Pal, had pressed the Indian National Conference to move Government to repeal the Emigration Act of 1882, which had reduced the coolies on the tea estates to a condition of semi-slavery.

In all these cases the main object of the leaders was to give a popular and mass character to the movement as Aurobindo Ghose and Tilak desired. Although their success was modest they laid the foundation on which Gandhiji built his mass activity.

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[40] *New India*, 9 September 1901.

[41] *Dawn*, vol. III, p. 233 (Bipin Chandra, *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India*, p. 790, note 266).

[42] *Englishman*, quoted by *Times of India*, 28 July 1906. (Reisner and Goldberg, *Tilak*, p. 421).

The Congress

The 1905 session of the Congress was held when the new dispensation —Minto-Morley combine—had just commenced. During the year the polarization of political opinion was beginning to appear among the Indian leaders. The bearers of the new spirit were men of strong will, they had been mortified by the humiliations and insults heaped upon them by Bampfylde Fuller, Anglo-Indian officials and non-officials and their fraternity. Their feeling was for strong retaliation regardless of consequences. They wanted to extend the boycott of British cloth to everything British, the defiance of particular orders to general passive disobedience including the non-payment of taxes, if necessary; their goal was Swaraj.

The older leaders became apprehensive of this tendency towards extremism and were afraid it would lead to untoward consequences—crushing repression, which would put an end to all genuine political movements. In their opinion British guidance was still necessary because of the backwardness and ignorance of the people, and India's helplessness against foreign invasion. They hoped to remove the weaknesses of the country with the help of the British, and therefore desired the continuance of British rule till the country was fully capable of self-government. They therefore wanted to restrain what they regarded as dangerous exuberance. They believed that although the bureaucrats in India were unsympathetic, an appeal to the democratic people of England would prove fruitful. Cotton in his address in Bombay had advised the Congress to activise propaganda in England.

Both the attitudes were represented among the delegates who met in December 1905 at Banaras. The session marked the turning point in the politics of India. Gokhale in his address describing the situation in India spoke of "the worst factors of the present system of bureaucratic rule—its utter contempt for public opinion, its arrogant pretensions to superior wisdom, its reckless disregard of the most cherished feelings of the people, the mockery of an appeal of its sense of justice, its cool preference of service interests to those of the governed"[43]. He affirmed, "never was discontent in India more acute and widespread than when the late Viceroy (Curzon) had laid down the reins of office"[44], and exclaimed in anguish, "All I can say is goodbye to all hopes of cooperating in any way with the bureaucracy in the interests of the people"[45].

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[43] Gokhale, G.K. Presidential Address, 21st Congress, Benaras, 1905. *The Indian National Congress* (Natesan), p. 796.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 793.

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 797.

He justified the decision of Bengal to take recourse to boycott, but warned against its employment as "a normal feature of relations with England". With regard to Swadeshi his support was enthusiastic. The goal which he placed before the country was a form of government similar to what existed in the self-governing colonies of the British empire to be reached by reasonably cautious steps.

Lajpat Rai advocated the adoption of the method of passive resistance. He said, "the method which is perfectly legitimate, constitutional and perfectly justifiable is the method of passive resistance". It was obvious that a new party which believed in a militant programme was emerging in the Congress. An important resolution of the Congress was the determination to carry on Congress work throughout the year. The resolution on Swadeshi, however, did not mention boycott. The Congress also decided to send a deputation to England consisting of Gokhale and Lajpat Rai, to rouse British interest in Indian problems. Obviously the character of the Congress was changing from an annual conference to an organisation for continuous political activity.

Terrorists

The struggle against foreign rule almost always leads an excitable section of the youth to violence. In India which had been wholly disarmed by Government and where the revolutionaries could not procure weapons openly, secret organisations were formed to carry out the plans.

Individuals and small groups had resorted to such methods even before 1905. In Maharashtra the Chaphekar brothers had shot Rand and Ayerst and Tilak was accused of sympathy with the act. Tilak never denied his admiration for acts of such supreme sacrifice in the interests of patriotic causes. In fact he defended the murder of Afzal Khan by Shivaji precisely on this ground, and he explained that the *Bhagavad Gita* taught the duty of fighting against injustice and unrighteousness.

The extraordinary fervour of the Partition agitation and the bitter resentment against Government measures of repression carried some of the more ardent and reckless of the extremists to entertain violent retaliation. Not only did they hold the moderate leaders in contempt, they regarded the more balanced and realistic leaders like Bipin Chandra Pal and Tilak as over-cautious.

After the Barisal incident even such moderate papers as the *Hitavadi* and the *Indian Mirror* apprehended "that arms will at last be used against arms and the white man's blood will atone for the blood drawn from the inoffensive boys"[46]. The *Sandhya* and *Yugantar* preached the gospel of blood and fire, "force must be stopped by force."[47]

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[46] *Hitavadi*, 21 April 1906. (Haridas Mukherjee & Uma Mukherjee, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 166.

Barindra Kumar Ghose, Bhupendra Nath Dutt and Brahma Bandhab Upadhyaya were the fiery spirits behind the terrorist movement which took root in Bengal. The role of Aurobindo Ghose in these activities cannot be ascertained with absolute certainty. By conviction he was not a believer in non-violence. He visited Bengal even before the Partition to assess the situation and formulate a programme of action. He had sent in 1902 a Bengali, Jatindra Nath Banerji of the Baroda State Army, to tour Bengal to scout the possibilities, In 1904, his brother Barindra arrived in Calcutta and made contacts to organise societies for secret work. Aurobindo on arrival in Calcutta became the adviser of the Yugantar group. He himself admitted later that he was immediately connected with organising revolutionary activities as a preparation for open revolt, "in case passive resistance proved insufficient for the purpose"[48]. When he visited Poona after the Surat split, he was invited to a secret show of bomb-making.

The most important organisation of the terrorist party was the Anushilan Samiti with its centres in both Bengals. In Calcutta there were two sections—in Bhowanipur and Howrah, and other centres at Khulna and Jessore, Midnapore and in several other districts. In East Bengal Dacca was the main centre and there were branches at Mymensingh and many other places.

The Anushilan Samiti was ostensibly an organisation for promoting social welfare and physical exercises; but its real object was to paralyse the administration by dacoity and assassination.[49] Its network was spread over a wide area and it had sympathisers and collaborators in many parts of India. The growth of terrorist activity was deplorable but in the circumstances almost inevitable. Many Indians were pained and distressed by its activities. But the youth openly and more so privately applauded the patriotism, courage and dare-devilry of the terrorists. Their exploits spread hatred of Brtish rule and stiffened the will to be free.

But terrorism was confined to a small group of youngmen. Its start was hesitant, but it gathered momentum rapidly. As the anti-partition agitation spread more widely and became more desperate, the Government measures to supress it increased in vigour. As a consequence the group which believed in violence made greater appeal to youth. During 1906, the revolutionary net spread out in Bengal and in other provinces.

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[48] Ghose, A., *Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother* (Tripathi, Amlesh, *The Extremist Challenge*, p. 135).

[49] Tripathi, Amlesh, *The Extremist Challenge* in Appendix C a table is given of terrorist outrages in Bengal, based on J. C. Nixon's Index to Notes on Outrages, Vol. IX, 1917.

III. The Third Phase

Organised Activity

While propagandist activity through public meetings and press was proceeding with accelerated pace and massive demonstrations were churning up patriotic sentiment, a constructive programme of a more solid and durable character was launched to bring organised pressure upon the rulers. The aim was twofold—economic and political. It warned the British people that their economic interests stood in jeopardy if they allowed their governing agency of India to continue to flout Indian opinion, if the British Parliament persisted in the policy of free trade to the detriment of Indian economy and if the Government of India played a subservient role to the manufacturers of Lancashire. Its other object was to provide popular protection and incentive to indigenous industry, for the Government had failed to do so.

The planks of the threefold programme were Swadeshi and Boycott, the promotion of national education to awaken pride in national history and culture and to inculcate self-reliance, patriotism and independence of thinking.

Swadeshi

The Swadeshi and Boycott movements had a long history, which passed through three phases. In the first phase which commenced sometime in the middle of the 19th century the idea of Swadeshi began to emerge. The gospel of Swadeshi was first preached in Maharashtra by Lokahitawadi through the columns of the *Prabhakar*. In Bengal the Hindu Mela provided a platform to Nabagopal Mitra and Rajnarain Bose to advocate the replacement of foreign articles by indigenous goods. Dadabhai Naoroji, Mandalik, Ranade, G. V. Joshi and Tilak in Western India; Bholanath Chander, Surendranath Banerjea, K. K. Mitra and others in Bengal; and Madan Mohan Malaviya, Murlidhar and the Arya Samaj leaders like Sain Das in northern India, sponsored the movement. From about 1870 to 1896 the Swadeshi propaganda was spread throughout India by newspapers and by public associations like the Sarvajanik Sabha, Poona, the Industrial Association and the Provincial Conferences. Societies and leagues were started to organise the boycott of British textile goods in which apart from public men, students took an active interest. This movement received a great impetus in 1896 from the imposition of countervailing excise duties on Indian cotton goods at the behest of Manchester. In 1896, Tilak exhorted the people of Maharashtra to adhere to Swadeshi and Boycott. In 1897, Tagore established Swadeshi shops. In 1901-2, Jogesh Chandra Chowdhary, a lawyer, organised the first industrial exhibition of indigenous articles along with the session of the Indian National Congress at Calcutta. The Maharajas of Mymensingh and Kasimbazar, Sitanath Roy, S. Chowdhary and others opened a Swadeshi Store in Calcutta. In 1902, Surendranath Banerjea suggested in his presidential address at Ahmedabad that "since Government refused to protect Indian industries by tariff, Indians should resolve to use indigenous goods to stimulate the growth of Indian industry."[50]

In Panjab the Arya Samaj strongly advocated Indian cultural revival and supported the economic and political resurgence of India. One of the planks of propaganda was Swadeshi.

But till 1905 the agitation was largely motivated by economic considerations.

In 1905 the Partition of Bengal vastly extended the scope and area of the movement. Industrialists like Tata associated themselves with the cause of Swadeshi, and the professional classes invested their capital in Swadeshi enterprises. Gandhiji remarked in 1908, "after the Partition, people saw that petitions must be backed up by force and that they must be capable of suffering..........The Boycott and Swadeshi movements were inaugurated."[51]

The movement was not merely economic, but had developed into a political weapon. What is more significant, it soon became the expression of India's yearning for political independence and the manifestation of India's determination to realize its national identity, its selfhood. It sought to discover the spirit which constituted the invisible connecting link between the varied cultural formulations of the past and the uniting thread in the plurality of the communities of the people in the present.

Rabindranath Tagore, Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghose were the leading lights of this broader Swadeshi movement in Bengal, Tilak and Lajpat Rai in Western and Northern India. Tagore expounded the idea on 22 July, 1904 in an essay on Swadeshi Samaj read at a meeting presided over by R. C. Dutt. The pledge given in the essay explains the objects of the Samaj :[52]

(1) to undertake the fulfilment of the country's needs by the effort of the people themselves;

(2) to take over the responsibility of the people on their own shoulders;

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[50] *Report of the 18th Indian National Congress*, Ahmedabad, 1902, p. 44.

[51] Gandhi, M.K. *Hind Swaraj* (1958 edition), pp. 25-26.

[52] Varma, Devajyoti, *Rabindranath*, pp. 32-33.

(3) to execute all national activities with the agency of Indians alone and to refuse the help of aliens in these matters;
(4) to abstain from the use of foreign cloth and other goods;
(5) to refrain from writing letters to relations and friends in the English language, using English goods, English furniture, English music, English drinks, and having social intercourse with the English people;
(6) to establish Indian schools;
(7) to decide disputes without resort to the courts established by the British Government.

Boycott

The Swadeshi movement was the positive part of the programme of which boycott was the defiant and dynamic aspect. The boycott was taken up as a reprisal for the Government's arrogant contempt for public opinion and its rejection on the ground that it was Hindu opinion. When in July 1905 the Partition was announced there was an immediate reaction, and the *Hitaishi* of Barisal and *Sanjivani* of Calcutta threw out the challenge of boycott. In the meeting of the seventh of August at Calcutta attended by several thousand people the pledge of boycott was taken.

Then the agitation spread like wild fire throughout Bengal. The Indian press was loud in its protestations against the Partition and supported the boycott. Largely attended meetings were held in all parts of Bengal. The excitement was so great that some people forgot to discriminate between truth and falsehood. They condemned foreign sugar because blood and bones were alleged to be used in its purification, salt because it was packed with beef. Foreign cloth, cigarettes and other articles were consigned to bonfires in the streets.

All classes of people joined the movement. The Zamindars sent their agents to prevent their tenants from using foreign cloth. The Landlords Association tried to induce the Marwari merchants to stop dealings in Manchester cloth. Religious and social pressure was exercised to promote boycott. Brahmin priests of Santipur and Navadwip were won over to support the boycott. They refused to perform religious rites for those who wore foreign clothes or used foreign articles. Professional men—doctors, lawyers and teachers, refused to serve those who did not join the movement. Even labourers, barbers and washermen refused to work for them. Efforts were made to enlist the Sadhus (religious mendicants) and Sannyasis to propagate the use of Indian goods. The temples of Kali provided the venue for meetings, lectures and vows to give up purchases of foreign made goods, and foreign merchants' shops.[53]

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[53] Home Dept. Public A, Progs. June 1906, No. 177; and also Home Dept. Public A, October 1907, Nos. 50-60.

S. N. Banerjea wrote, "stamped with the seal of approbation by ministers of religion, sanctified by the holiest ceremony in the most sacred temple and affirmed by the solemn vows of thousands of Indians, the Swadeshi movement went forth as a sacred cause."[54]

The most zealous workers for the movement were students from schools and colleges. The societies (*Samitis*) organised volunteer corps for picketing and propaganda which mainly consisted of the youth from educational institutions.

The movement affected the sale of English cloth during the Puja of 1905. The Marwari merchants appealed to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce to press their Government to annul the Partition, but without success. The sales of cloth in the eight districts of Jessor, Bogra. Dacca, Nadia, Burdwan, Malda, Arrah and Hazaribagh fell from Rs. 77,000 in Septembr 1904, to Rs. 10,000 in September 1905.[55]

At parties. marriage ceremonies and offerings to deities foreign articles were tabooed. Spinning wheels were distributed in the villages in order to revive the weaving industry. The effect on the mill industry was wholesome. In Eastern Bengal in 1905-6 eleven factories were added to the seventy-one already existing, and the imports from foreign countries showed a decrease of 16 per cent and Liverpool salt, a decline of 6,000 tons. It was the same with foreign liquors.[56] The *Times* (London) reviewing the English exports in cotton piecegoods for May 1907 remarked, "India took less by 44,492,500 yds."[57]

So far as the country-made cloth was concerned, the demand had pushed up the earnings of the weavers working with the fly shuttle to Rs. 20 per month or nearly double the average earnings of the class.[58]

The President of the Industrial Conference for 1906 pointed out, "twenty two cotton mills were started in Ahmedabad and Bombay and fifteen banks with a capital of nearly four crore rupees and five navigation companies with a capital of a crore and quarter have been established."[59]

But the incentive which the movement provided to the mill industry was vastly different from what it did for handloom industry, as the following table shows :[60]

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[54] *The Bengalee*, 3 October 1905.

[55] *The Statesman*, September 1905.

[56] Nevinson, H.W., *op. cit.*, p. 180.

[57] *Ibid.* p., 181.

[58] *Land Revenue Administration Report of the Lower Provinces* (1906-7), Cited *ibid.*, p. 180.

[59] *Report of the third Industrial Conference*, P. 28-29.

Year	Mill (yds.)	Handloom (yds.)	Imports
1896-7—1898-9	295 m.	996 m.	1,911 m.
1906-7—1908-9	667 m.	1,072 m.	2,154 m.
1916-7—1918-9	1,301 m.	720 m.	1,397 m.

The handloom industry was a hereditary occupation and its profit motive was at the minimum. Its produce, that is, coarse plain grey cloth, had only a local market and catered to the needs of the poorer sections of the rural society. Its cheapness and local availability were its assets, but it could not compete with the mill industry in supplying the growing needs of the country. The mill industry of India, on the other hand, took the fullest advantage of the political upsurge in favour of indigenous goods and made rapid progress, till it almost wholly displaced the Manchester products from the Indian market.

But while the Swadeshi movement received universal support—including that of some Government officials, the boycott was regarded with apprehension. In the Congress session of 1905, the President struck a cautious note, calling boycott "a vindictive desire to injure another." Madan Mohan Malaviya and other moderate leaders opposed the attempts of Lajpat Rai and some Bengal leaders to commit the Congress to adopt the boycott resolution. The failure led to unfortunate developments because it widened the differences between the Moderates and the Extremists, and eventually led to a split in 1907.

Indian National Congress and Swadeshi-Boycott Movement

The Swadeshi-Boycott movement continued with fluctuating tempo in the following years. In 1906 it was at its peak. The Indian National Congress which met in December 1906 at Calcutta recognised it as the expression of the will of the people. But the political leaders who expected from the Liberal Government in England a sympathetic response to the demands of Indians were apprehensive lest boycott stiffen the attitude of Government and strengthen the hands of the opponents of reform. They disapproved of the passing of the boycott resolution. In order to avert the possibility of the Extremists swaying the Congress and obtaining control over the organisation, and to checkmate the endeavour of the Extremists to commit the Congress to their programme, these leaders invited Dadabhai Naoroji, the Grand Old Man of India, who was held in the highest respect by all parties, to preside over the session and lend his prestige to restrain extreme counsels.

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[60] Mehta, S.D., *Indian Cotton Textile Industry*, pp. 136 and 140.

But the extremist leaders insisted upon the adoption of their proposals. After a battle in the Subjects Committee of the Congress a compromise resolution was accepted in the open session. It declared, "the boycott movement inaugurated in Bengal by way of protest against the Partition of that province was and is legitimate." The support of the Congress for Swadeshi was more forthright; it approved the effort to promote the growth of indigenous industries "even at some sacrifice."

Dadabhai Naoroji tried to placate both parties. He took the country a stage further by declaring in his presidential address that Swaraj was the goal of India's struggle. The Moderates understood by this term a form of government on the model of the Dominions functioning within the British Empire. For the Extremists it meant self-government within the Empire if possible, outside it if necessary.

Swaraj, Swadeshi and Boycott were interpreted in different ways by the two parties in the Congress, and the events of 1906 and 1907 increased the gulf between the two. The Moderates laid stress upon the economic aspects of Swadeshi and looked upon Boycott as a transitory measure to be cautiously used and only for the revocation of the Partition. The Extremists were of opinion that both Swadeshi and Boycott were principally weapons of political warfare of a disarmed subject people against the forces of the fully armed imperialist power. From their point of view the movement was to be judged not on the basis of its economic results but for its effectiveness in rousing national pride and self-reliance.

The movement created a new situation for the Government. It gave a blow to the prestige of the rulers. A government note complained, "the general attitude of the Bengali became insolent and aggressive."[61]

Government Reaction

The riposte of the Government to the public upheaval had begun under Curzon. His chief instrument in carrying out the policy of repression was Bampfylde Fuller, Lieutenant-Governor of the newly created province of East Bengal and Assam. Curzon and Fuller believed that all opposition to Government should be treated as sedition and ruthlessly put down by force. The assumption of office of Governor-General by Minto in India and of the Secretary of State soon after by Morley in England brought about a modification in the policy.

Both Minto and Morley were convinced that reliance upon repression alone could not prove successful in suppressing Indian unrest. A two-sided attack was required. Firstly, it was necessary that all the elements of society which could be weaned away from the nationalist group seeking rapid political advance and preaching self-reliance, should be offered various kinds of inducements to ensure their loyalty. Minto held that the section of the population represented by the Congress could never play a leading part in government, but thought "it will be the greatest mistake to attempt to set the Congress aside."[62] He therefore intended to keep in touch with such leaders as S.N. Banerjea, Motilal Ghose and Gokhale, who led the moderate wing of the Congress. With this end in view he devised a plan of concessions.

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[61] Report of the Inspector-General of Police, Bengal, 2nd December, 1905 in Home Dept. Public A, June 1906, Nos. 172-177.

The other side of the policy was to stultify the Congress by conciliating the Muslims and stimulating their loyalty to the British Raj, and to alienate their sympathies from the nationalists who were agitating for constitutional change and annulment of the Partition of Bengal.

So far as the Partition was concerned, Minto had in his reply to the Indian Association's address on 12 January 1906 firmly refused to reverse the policy of his predecessor on this matter. This declaration was intended to please the Muslims. But he realised that the only way in which constitutional advance towards self-government could be prevented was to perpetuate disagreement between the two communities.

To ensure the success of his plans it was also necessary to divide the nationalist forces, so that the opposition of the moderate group might be blunted, regardless of his policy towards the Muslims. Besides, the alluring though vague prospect of political reform which was dangled before them, a step was taken to strike the imagination of the Indian agitators.

Fuller's Resignation

Bampfylde Fuller was proving a saboteur of the new dual policy of repression-cum-concession. He had let loose unbridled coercion in East Bengal, humiliating and insulting respected leaders, ruthlessly punishing teachers and students—even flogging them, besides imposing fines and rusticating many. Loud demands for his removal had arisen. Gokhale in England addressed meetings of protest, and asserted, "there is no hope of peace till he is relieved of his duties."[63]

Minto was alarmed. "he was not at all pleased with what he had gathered of Fuller's doings", he wrote to Morley[64].

Morley agreed. He replied, "I cannot but read in Fuller's utterances a most stupid misconception of the prudent policy..Partition was a disagreeable pill and Fuller had gilded the pill with wormwood."[65]

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[62] *Morley papers;* Minto to Morley, 2 April 1906.

[63] Gokhale, G.K., *op. cit.*, vol. II, 19 May 1906, p. 366.

[64] *Minto Papers;* Minto to Morley, 29 March 1906.

[65] *Ibid.*, Morley to M nto, 25 April 1906.

Fuller was warned, but nothing could deter him from the reckless course of action he was pursuing. He demanded from the Calcutta University disaffiliation of two schools in Serajganj. This brought him into conflict with the Government of India. He was asked to withdraw the demand, but he refused and asked permission to resign his post. The Viceroy without giving a chance to Fuller to reconsider his offer of resignation, instantly informed him that his resignation was accepted. Thus the champion of Curzonian ruthlessness ate the humble pie. His disappearance (20 August 1906) from the scene, however, did not mean the victory of the popular cause.

Muslim Reaction

The anti-partition agitation made an unfavourable impression on the Muslims in general and those of Eastern Bengal in particular, because the agitation was given a heavy religious colouring. It relied upon Hindu religious ritual—fasting, abstaining from lighting fire in kitchens, closing shops, mourning processions, tying coloured thread as a token of fraternal bond (*Rakhi bandhan*), walking bare-footed for bath in the Ganges, taking vows in Kali temples, etc.—repugnant to Islamic principles.

The attitude of the Hindu employees against the favours shown to Muslims in services roused resentment. The boycott enforced by picketing and pressure of Hindu Zamindars on village markets affected small Muslim pedlars' means of livelihood.

The leaders of the agitation should have known that resort to sectarian religious fervour in order to obtain modification of a political decision was not the right way to attract the Muslim sympathy to their cause, especially when it implied the sacrifice of solid advantages to the community.

The Muslims were greatly perturbed at the short shrift given to their patron, Fuller. They were, however, soon reassured, for Government had not the remotest intention of letting down their proteges and provoking their *volte-face*. The Viceroy's pronouncement at Simla on October 1, 1906, lifted the gathering clouds of distrust and doubt The Muslims in East Bengal felt elated and the bigoted Mullahs went through the country preaching the revival of Islam, and proclaiming to the villagers that the British Government was on the Mohammedan side, that the Law Courts had been specially suspended for three months, and no penalty would be exacted for disobeying Hindu authorities, or for the looting of Hindu shops, or the abduction of Hindu women. A Red Pamphlet was everywhere circulated, maintaining the same wild doctrines[66].

Spurred by the Simla good news the chauvinistic ambitions of the bigoted Mullahs were excited. Further encouragement was given by the attitude of Morley and Minto. Morley welcomed the formation of the Muslim League as a "native opposition" to the Congress. Minto wrote to Hare, the successor of Fuller, "the fact that the Muhammadan population has been thoroughly aroused has introduced a factor into the history of the new Province which, I trust, will prove most useful."[67]

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[66] Nevinson, H.W, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

Hare took advantage of Minto's attitude and importuned him to advance a loan of £100,000 at a low rate of interest to relieve the Nawab of Dacca from impending bankruptcy. He considered the stability of the Nawab a matter of political importance, for it was due to him that the Muslims "have until very recently continued to be loyal to Government."[68]

The effect upon the Hindu community was, as could be foreseen, the reverse of what it was on the Muslims. They became more bitter and more determined to secure the reversal of Partition. Agitation became intenser and attacks on Government in press and on platform angrier. B.C. Pal made a hurricane tour through Eastern Bengal. The *Bande Mataram* of Calcutta poured out passionate invocations to people for offering sacrifices and showing manful resistance to the alien government. Numerous Indian language papers advocated open defiance of authority.

A war of pamphlets and propaganda was let loose. The notorious Red Pamphlet preached the boycott of Hindu shops, products of Hindu industry, and the opening of Muslim schools. It proclaimed:

"The Hindus have robbed us of wealth, honour and the glory of Islam. They spread the Swadeshi net to take our lives. O Mohammedan, give not your wealth into the house of Hindus. Lowest of all is he who cries *Bande Mataram* with the Hindus."[69]

Communal Riots

In an atmosphere made tense by propaganda and counter-propaganda it is not surprising that clashes occurred. Rioting had begun in the Mymensingh district in April and May 1906 causing a panic among the Hindus[70].

Communal riots on a bigger scale recurred in 1907 at Comilla in Tipperah district and in Jamalpur Taluk of Mymensingh district.

At Comilla the occasion was the visit of the Nawab of Dacca who had undertaken a tour to strengthen the morale of his co-religionists in the first week of March 1907. The provocation was provided by some one throwing brickbats at the Nawab's procession. A melee ensued in which a Muslim was shot and killed. The indifference of the Police led to killings, looting and arson, which continued for nearly a week.[71]

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[67] *Minto Papers:* Minto to Hare, 11 November 1906.

[68] *Ibid.,* Hare to Minto, 27 April 1907.

[69] For translation of the pamphlet, see Home Department Political A, Progs. July 1907, Nos. 189-192.

[70] Home Department, Public A, Progs. July 1906, No. 124; also H. Risley to Arthur Godley, Under Secretary of State, 12 July 1906.

In Jamalpur Taluk disturbances began on 21 April and continued till 10 May. Markets were plundered, houses and offices of Zamindars and respectable persons were burnt, Durga temples were desecrated, women abducted, and much loss of life took place. In the trials which followed, the Calcutta High Court made caustic remarks about the partisanship of the Sessions Judge who had tried the Hindu accused.

Nevinson describes in detail the atrocities committed by the rioters and concludes, "thus a new religious feud was established in Eastern Bengal."[72]

Risley philosophized, "the agitation against partition has resolved itself into a condition of general ill feeling between Hindus and Mohammedans.. All that we can do is to wait and see."[73]

Morley gave to the Parliament an analysis of the causes of the riots in his budget speech (1907). His summing up was so casual and exasperating that Nevinson, an eye-witness, was forced to observe:

"It was a grotesque instance of the power that officials have of misleading their chief."[74]

Nevinson and Keir Hardie put the blame squarely on the shoulders of the Muslim ruffians, "while English officials looked on."[75]

Bampfylde Fuller justified the Muslims for using force against the Hindus, and relieved Government of all blame, as it "was placed in the awkward position of punishing a large number of loyal Muslims because they resented the oppression of Hindu school boys."[76]

The Congress Split

Apart from these developments, the announcement of Morley of his intention about administrative reorganisation caused a flutter. Politicians and parties began to hover between expectancy and anxiety. The Moderate wing of the Congress was anxious to prevent the acceptance of the Extremist programme of action by all means, for they were afraid it would strengthen the hands of the enemies of reform—the Conservatives of England and India and the bureaucrats who administered the country. On the other hand, the Nationalists had little faith in the good intentions of a government which had unleashed repression in different parts of India and openly sided with the anti-Congress elements.

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[71] Home Department, Pub. A Progs. May 1907, Nos. 159-71.

[72] Nevinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-3.

[73] Risleys note, 1 April 1907. Home Department, Public A Progs. May 1907. Nos. 159-71.

[74] Nevinson, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

[75] *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17, 191-3, 202.

[76] Fuller, J.B. *Vision Splendid of Indian Youth in Nineteenth Century, July* 1908 p. 20.

Gokhale, a leader of extraordinary devotion, sincerity of purpose, purity of character and intellectual ability, was the most active of the supporters of the Moderate point of view. He visited Morley in England and explained to him the nationalist demand. Morley without making any commitment, raised hopes in Gokhale's mind of a liberal quota of reforms. In the event, the hopes proved false. But in the middle of 1907 the Moderates relied upon the liberalism of the Secretary of State and endeavoured hard to counteract the attempt of the Nationalists to commit the Congress to an extremist programme..

In the tug of war which continued through the year, the Moderate leaders—Gokhale, Pherozeshah Mehta, Surendranath Banerjea, Madan Mohan Malaviya and others—were pitted against Tilak, Aurobindo Ghose, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lajpat Rai, and their associates. The two sides exerted themselves to the utmost for obtaining control over the most important political organisation of India, *viz.* the Indian National Congress, which commanded not only the homage of nationalist India but was also recognised by the Government as an important factor in Indian politics, which could not be disregarded.

The Nationalists had started the campaign almost immediately after the Calcutta session of 1906. Tilak declared that his party did not believe in the benevolence of Government and wanted full control over the administrative machinery to be obtained through boycott. "I want to have the key of my own house. Self-government is our goal."[77] Aurobindo Ghose, presiding over the Bengal Provincial Conference at Midnapore early in 1907, rebuffed the Moderates. In April he wrote a number of articles on Passive Resistance in the *Bande Mataram* and flayed the Moderates in words of angry rhetoric:

"From any idea of open struggle with the bureaucracy they shrank with terror and a sense of paralysis. Dominated by the idea of the overwhelming might of Britain and the abject weakness of India, their want of courage and faith in the nation, their rooted distrust of the national character, disbelief in Indian patriotism and blindness to the possibility of true political strength and virtue in the people precluded them from discovering the rough and narrow way to salvation."[78]

He confessed he wanted "to capture the Congress and to make it an instrument for revolutionary action."[79]

The Moderates' creed on the other hand was:

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[77] Speech at Calcutta, January 2, 1906, see *Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Writings and Speeches* (Ganesh & Co., Madras), pp. 37-52.

[78] Aurobindo Ghose, *The Doctrine of Passive Resistance*, pp. 20-21.

[79] Aurobindo Ghose, *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and the Mother*, p. 47.

"The goal of the Congress is that India should be governed in the interests of the Indians themselves, and that, in course of time, a form of government should be attained in this country similar to what exists in the self-governing colonies of the British Empire."[80]

Pherozeshah Mehta defined the object of the Congress in these words:

"We delegates, representatives of the people, meet together at the end of the year to give voice to the public opinion of the country taking shape and formulating throughout the year, to present our Petition of Rights, our Grand Remonstrance, our prayer for a firm and unfaltering grasp of a policy of wisdom and righteousness."[81]

The Moderates were anxious to save the Congress from extremist courses. Gokhale had been trying hard to persuade Morley to call a halt to repression and expedite reforms. He had warned Minto, "the younger generation of India is going over to the extremist side."[82] He approached Morley in October 1907, through Wedderburn and drew attention of the Secretary of State to the possibility of the extremists obtaining sway over the Congress. This forced Morley to communicate his annoyance to Minto in these words: "I hardly expected that Gokhale would play such a stupid game as he is doing. It is such trash his talking about the bureaucracy putting down the Congress and brushing him and his friends aside."[83]

To his own countrymen Gokhale was advising: "Wait! Trust in Mr. Morley and the Liberal Party". For had they not appointed Indians to the Council of the Secretary of State[84], and were considering the name of an Indian for the Viceroy's Executive Council?

Nagpur had been chosen in 1906 as the venue of the next session in December 1907. But the Reception Committee formed at Nagpur to elect the President failed to do so, as neither party could muster the required majority of three-fourths of the members. Thus the All-India Congress Committee met at Mehta's house at Bombay and shifted the venue to Surat which was considered a stronghold of Pherozeshah Mehta.

The Nationalists were annoyed. Tempers were frayed. At Surat before the session opened some attempts were made to bring about a compromise, but both parties had taken up rigid attitudes and the

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[80] Gokhale, G.K., Presidential Speech (1905). *The Indian National Congress* (1917), p. 812.

[81] Mehta, Pherozeshah, Twentieth Congress, 1904, Welcome Address. *Ibid.* Part III., p. I.

[82] Minto to Morley, March 1909 (Lady Minto, India Minto and Morley, p. 109).

[83] Morley to Minto, 23 November 1907, cited in Sastri, S., *Life of G.K. Gokhale.* p. 74.

[84] K.G. Gupta and S.A. Bilgrami in July 1907.

Moderates were not prepared to yield. They had selected Rash Behari Ghosh, a lawyer of the front rank of the Calcutta Bar who had played a prominent part in the anti-partition movement, as their candidate for the presidentship.

The Nationalists were against the choice and Tilak in the open session on 26 December opposed his election. This caused an uproar and the session had to be adjourned for the next day. Next day Tilak walked upto the rostrum to address the delegates. But he was not allowed to speak. Some delegates tried to push him, a shoe was hurled at him, which missing him, hit Surendra Nath Banerjea and Pherozeshah Mehta. Utter confusion followed. The police at the request of Pherozeshah Mehta cleared the pandal. The Congress had split.

The Moderates retained control over the Congress. They met immediately after and drafted the new creed of the Congress. Only those who accepted it were declared eligible for membership of the Congress; and the Nationalists were thereby excluded. The Nationalists were isolated, for the Moderates extended their support to the Government. They had, therefore, to face the full and determined attacks which the Government launched against them.

Unrest Continues

The Swadeshi and boycott movement acquired great vigour in 1907. Reports of the destruction of foreign goods were frequent, news of serious disturbances as a result of the aggressive attitude of the volunteers and of Muslim attacks on Hindus poured in from the districts.

In Panjab an agitation against the amendment of the Colonisation Act assumed serious proportions. The agricultural classes including the Sikhs were stirred. The editors of the *Panjabee* of Lahore and *India* were prosecuted and jailed, leading to rioting and assaults. In Rawalpindi disturbances occurred. On May 10 Lajpat Rai, and on May 3, Ajit Singh were deported to Mandalay on mere suspicion. Lajpat Rai was released in November. An Ordinance was issued, the Regulation of Meetings Ordinance, 1907, prohibiting political gatherings in Panjab and Eastern Bengal.

Meanwhile Bipin Chandra Pal toured the Madras Presidency. The students were enthused, they defied the orders of the authorities and were punished. Violent demonstrations followed. Chidambaram Pillay and his colleagues were charged and sentenced to transportation.

In Calcutta Bipin Chandra Pal was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for refusing to give evidence against the editor of *Bande Mataram*. In September and October riots took place, and meetings were banned. Action was taken against prominent agitators.

In the United Provinces famine conditions prevailed in a number of districts, food prices were rising and suffering was widespread.

Maharashtra and the Deccan were in the throes of an agitation which began with protest against the partition of Bengal and developed into the broader demand for Swaraj. Tilak wrote a series of articles in *Kesari* laying stress upon the acquisition of political power through passive resistance. His fearless advocacy of Swaraj captured the mind of Maharashtra.

The year 1908 began in hope and fear. Minto wrote to Morley, "You will have been amused at the break-up of the Congress. As to what will happen now it is impossible to say till there is some indication of vitality by the Moderates or the Extremists. Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh was here (at the State dinner) last night and seemed very much to enjoy being chaffed about the proceedings at Surat."[85] He apprised Morley that the political situation was certainly more satisfactory than before.

The Extremists having lost the support and protection of the Congress stood in isolation to bear the brunt of Government wrath.

The hands of Government had been strengthened as it had succeeded in alienating the Muslims in northern India from the Nationalists and in creating a counterpoise to the Congress in the Muslim League. Consequently it took severe measures to crush the opposition.

But as Morley pointed out the excess of severity was not the path to order; on the contrary it was the path to the bomb. As evidence pointed towards the growing menace of secret revolutionary activity, Government resolved upon even severer measures.

Morley's liberalism was outraged by the treatment meted out to Lajpat Rai. He told Minto, "I shall not be in a hurry to sanction deportation any more, that is very certain; and if it all comes out, I should not be surprised if the Regulation of 1818 has to disappear"[86].

He was sore that the Government had not allowed Lajpat Rai to see his lawyer, "a hateful thing to do only worthy of Russia or say Austria in her Italian days"[87]. What was worse, the Government had misinformed him regarding Lajpat Rai's family correspondence, thus laying him open to "as heinous an offence as he can commit"[88]

The Government of India ignored the protests and warnings of the Secretary of State, with deplorable results. The year 1908 saw a hideous tug of war between a mighty government armed with powerful weapons of repression and using them with the utmost severity on the one side, and an infuriated but helpless people putting up resistance with all their force of will and sacrifice—open and secret, against the onslaught, on the other.

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[85] *Minto Papers:* Viceroy to Secretary of State, January 2, 1908.

[86] *Ibid.,* Morley to Minto, April 15, 1908.

[87] *Ibid.*

[88] *Ibid.*

Great restlessness prevailed in many parts of the country—Bengal, Eastern Bengal and Assam, Western India, Deccan, Panjab, Madras Presidency, Uttar Pradesh.

There were disturbances in the districts of East Bengal (Mymensingh), attacks on the police and the Europeans, revolutionary outrages, and arrests, prosecutions and monstrous sentences.

In the Bombay Presidency and the Central Provinces riots took place in which the mill workers were involved. The Government of Bombay had marked out Bal Gangadhar Tilak as their most formidable opponent. In July. a case was started against him allegedly for writing in defence of the bomb, and a sentence of six years' imprisonment was passed It was regarded too risky to keep him in India and he was transported. to Burma. The savage sentence evoked equally stirring reaction. Rioting, shooting, manhandling and house-wrecking followed.

In Bengal, Aurobindo Ghose was implicated in the Alipore Bomb Case and had to spend over a year in detention. In December nine prominent Bengali leaders were deported to the utter bewilderment of the Secretary of State at the renewed use of the antiquated law which he had earlier condemned. He was so enraged that he threatened to overrule Minto if most of the deportees were not set at liberty. Minto carried out the order when the reformed councils were inaugurated.

By 1909 the anti-partition agitation had become overshadowed by other developments—the discussions on the proposals of Morley and Minto for constitutional reform, the deprivation of leadership of the Extremist Party because of imprisonment of the leaders, and the intensification of revolutionary activity.

Revolutionary Activity

During the anti-partition agitation the youth of Bengal greatly contributed to the success of the public movement. They organised meetings, arranged demonstrations, roused enthusiasm, provided volunteers for Swadeshi-Boycott propaganda and picketed, and did everything they could to bend the rulers to the public will. They suffered gladly for their devotion to the national cause. Many were fined, expelled, even beaten and flogged. But the harsher their treatment the more rebellious became their mood. The restrictions on their public activities compelled them to seek the shelter of secrecy in order to satisfy their ardour and achieve their aims.

Since 1905, if not earlier, many societies had been established for social welfare work. In the early stages their main function was physical and moral training and national service. Englishmen in the past used to taunt the Bengal's that they were a race of weaklings, cowardly, garrulous, lacking in manly virtues and without a sense of responsibility

The societies were brought into existence to refute the charges of the detractors.

They taught to the young members the use of weapons like *lathi* (long stave), dagger and sword play, and gymnastic exercises like boxing, wrestling and jiu-jitsu. They also imparted religious education through the study of sacred books like the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Chandi* and inculcated the worship of *Kali,* the stern goddess who destroyed demons. "The most practical teaching of the *Gita* is not to give way to any morbid sentimentality when duty demands sternness and boldness to face terrible things", was impressed on the minds of the young revolutionaries. Tilak's writings on the subject were quoted with approval. The message of the *Gita* 'The soul is indestructible, indefinable and everlasting; if slain you will attain heaven; if victorious you will possess the earth,' was imprinted on the young revolutionaries.

The destruction of the demons is a regular metaphor in Indian revolutionary literature. A passage in the poem *Chandi* says, "Come, Oh Mother Bhairavi, come to this earth to kill the hosts of wicked demons. Come Oh Chandi, to punish Chanda and Munda. Scoundrels are mangling the body to pieces with violent fury. The earth is dumbfounded and tears flow at the insolence of Shumbha and Nishumbha."

There were also other books like *Bartaman Rananiti* (Modern Art of War), *Mukti Kon Pathe* (Which way lies Salvation?), *Sikher Balidan* (The Sikh's Sacrifice), *Desher Katha and Shivaji, Life of Mazzini, Manual of Explosives,* etc., which inspired the young and impressionable minds with love of liberty and patriotism, hatred of foreign domination and showed the way to resist it.[89]

They arranged demonstrations and held sham fights. They attracted the youth for they appealed to their spirit of service, adventure and romance.

Their founders apparently intended to develop them from the very beginning as revolutionary bodies, and to serve perhaps as the nucleus of armed revolt. It was therefore necessary that their activities should be kept largely veiled from the prying eyes of the Government and the general public. They learnt the technique of bomb making, the use of revolvers and guns, and tactics of guerilla warfare. In order to procure weapons and munitions and provide for their expenses they collected funds by resort to social pressure, threat of boycott and as a last resort by dacoity or robbery.

The two Bengals were honeycombed with such societies. In Eastern Bengal and Assam there were five main societies (*Samitis*), but they had numerous branches scattered over the towns and villages of the province. These five were—(1) The *Anushilan Samiti* with its headquarters at Dacca,

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[89] Ker. J.C., *Political Trouble in India* (1917), pp. 48—62.

(2) the *Swadesh Bandhava Samiti* of Barisal (Bakarganj), (3) the *Suhri Samiti* of Mymensingh, (4) the *Brati Samiti* of Faridpur, and (5) th *Sadhana Samaj* of Mymensingh.

Among them the *Anushilan Samiti* was the most active. Its organise was Pulin Bihari Das, an intrepid, resourceful and dynamic personality The British officer on special duty who met him describes him as "a ascetic, disciplinarian, keen-witted but shallow";[90] a visionary enthusias with strong personal influence; cunning and deceitful; full of ambition The Society had 116 branches[91] and over 8,400 volunteer members[9 in June 1907. Its members took two vows : (1) unquestioning and absolute obedience to the leader, and (2) breaking of all family ties. It objects ostensibly were physical training and diffusion of Swadeshi principles, but its real aim was to effect a revolution and overthrow the Britis Government. The means employed were economic boycott, socia persecution, voluntary service at festivals, etc., and maintaining schools

Its revolutionary activity comprised of violence, dacoity, assassination, training in arms and making of bombs. By defiance of law an order and commitment of deeds of murder, robbery and rioting the Society intended to paralyse the administration.

In Western Bengal also there were many similar societies. The mos important among them was the *Anushilan Samiti* of Calcutta which wa the parent body of the one bearing the same name at Dacca. The tw were closely connected. The Calcutta Samiti had been established b Barendra Kumar Ghose (brother of Aurobindo Ghose). The aims an objects of the two were the same, both had a similar organisation an employed identical means for the realisation of their objects.

Outside Bengal also there were secret societies, some of which were in league with the Bengal organisation. The *Times* on 7th May 190 reported : "If Bengal has been chiefly conspicuous in its resort to destructive methods, the cunning brains that conceived and fostered th movement are probably to be found for the most part in Wester India..."

In Maharashtra, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, while yet in his teens fell under the spell of the writings of Tilak and Paranjpe (editor, *Kal*) He avidly read the literature of revolution, especially the Italian, Russia and Irish movements and became an ardent advocate of armed revolution As open hostilities against the Government were not immediately possible Savarkar organized secret societies—first the *Mitra Mela* and then *Abhinava Bharat*. He went to England in 1906, captured the minds of young Indian students, 'spreading the gospel of revolution among them'. Th

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[90] Home Dept. Proceedings, May 1909, Nos. 135-147. H. Salkeld report dated 10th December, 1908.

[91] *Ibid.*

[92] Home Deptt. Proceedings, February 1909, Nos. 112-136.

Revolt of 1857 now became the starting point of the War of Independence. n weekly meetings at the India House Savarkar preached his fiery anti-mperialist doctrine and won many adherents. Some of them learned bomb-making and shooting. Despite close watch kept on his activities by the authorities he succeeded in sending to India twenty Browning pistols and causing the death of the Magistrate of Nasik. The inquiry nto the attack led to the unearthing of the Society's activities, trial of he members including their leader and his incarceration at the Andamans for eleven years.

The record of the daring exploits of the revolutionaries is quite voluminous. In Eastern Bengal they roused Government suspicion early, and hough strong measures to suppress them were adopted, they had little effect. Ultimately the Provincial Government asked the Government of India o exercise their special powers under the law to declare them unlawful. Notifications were issued in the Government Gazette on January 5, 1909, and February 26, 1909 declaring altogether seven societies of the wo Bengals to be unlawful bodies.

So far as the *Anushilan Samiti* of Calcutta was concerned evidence gainst it was collected when the Maniktala garden was searched in May 1908 and 36 of its members, including the Ghose brothers, were arrested. n October 1909 the Samiti was banned. The work of the other Samitis vas more or less alike, as also their end.

What was the effect of the measures? It does not appear that revo-utionary activity ceased or was even greatly reduced. In 1908 there vere eight dacoities in Bengal, in 1909-10 there were 17. Punitive police had to be posted in Jessore, Khulna and Dacca and many arrests and prosecutions launched, including proceedings against Pulin Bihari Das. Conspiracies were detected in other parts of India, e.g., East Khandesh nd Gwalior. Murders still continued. Jackson, the Collector of Nasik, was shot at on December 21, 1909. Attempts were made on the ives of the Lieutenant Governors and the Governor-General.

Two bombs were thrown at the carriage of the Viceroy in Ahmedabad on November 13, 1909, but they failed to explode.

The ramifications of the revolutionary plots extended outside India o Europe.

In July 1909, Curzon Wyllie was killed in London. On January 26, 1910, the Deputy Superintendent of CID Police was shot in the Cal-utta High Court.

Minto's policy of stark repression in which Morley had acq-iesced, made a two-pronged attack on the nationalist forces working n public and in secret. The leaders were sought to be made ineffective nd the press to be gagged. The results were that by 1910 the topmost xtremist leaders were out of the fight. Bipin Chandra Pal and Lajpat

Rai went into self-imposed exile, Aurobindo escaped to Pondicherry and Tilak remained incarcerated in Mandalay. Many others felt the heavy hand of Government and the vigilant attention of the Criminal Investigation Department, and had to move about with great caution.

The cases against the expression of opinion were numerous Many newspapers were suppressed, some lost their security, declarations were cancelled and cases instituted for seditious articles.

The Government of Minto spread a wide net to enmesh and strangle all unpalatable opinion and opposition. Among the Acts and Ordinances the following were noteworthy :

(1) *The Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act* 1907—On 11th May, 1907 an Ordinance called the Regulation of Meetings Ordinance 1907 (1 of 1907) was promulgated with the object of controlling the meetings in connection with agitation in Bengal and Panjab. As the force of the Ordinance would expire on 10th November, the Government passed the Seditious Meetings Act, 1907 (11 of 1907) on November 1, 1907. Under its provisions no public meeting could be held in any proclaimed area for the discussion of public or political matters unless a written notice was given at least seven days previously to the District Superintendent of Police. The District Magistrate was authorized to prohibit the holding of the meetings. A meeting held in contravention of the law rendered the holders of the meeting liable to imprisonment or fine. A prohibited meeting was to be deemed an unlawful assembly.

(2) *The Explosive Substances Act*, 1908. — This Act was passed by the Governor-General in Council on June 8, 1908. Its object was suppression of anarchist acts and punishment of persons who used explosives likely to endanger life or property. It made the manufacture and possession of explosives a substantive offence involving adequate punishment.

(3) *The Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act*, 1908 (*XIV of* 1908).— The Act which was at first applied to Bengal was extended in January 1910 to the major provinces. It made drastic changes in the criminal law and procedure, in order to secure speedy trial, to commit persons to a special tribunal of three judges of the High Court, to refuse bail to the accused, to admit evidence of witnesses, and to prohibit appeals.

The Act gave power to the Government to declare an association of persons unlawful if in its opinion it interfered with the administration or maintenance of law and order or constituted a danger to public peace.

(4) *The Newspapers* (*Incitement & Offences*) *Act*, 1908. — The measure was intended to stop seditious writings in newspapers, pamphlets and books, or suggestions and excitement against British rule.

(5) *The Press Act,* 1910. — The Newspapers (Incitement to Offences) Act of 1908 having proved ineffective, a Bill was brought before the legislature in order to exercise control over presses and means of publication, over publishers, and over the importation into India and the transmission by post of seditious and objectionable matter, as well as to secure the suppression of newspapers considered undesirable or seditious. It provided for the deposit of security by the proprietors of presses and publishers. Offences against the Act made the person concerned liable to forfeiture of security. The law came into force on February 9, 1910.

Apart from the Ordinances and laws numerous executive orders and circulars were issued by the authorities to suppress the movement.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MORLEY-MINTO REFORMS

I. BRITISH ATTITUDE

Repression brought about division in the British public opinion which was reflected in the Parliament. The two sides were clearly marked. The House of Lords was dominated by the Conservatives, who on Indian affairs followed Curzon, and supported Minto. For them any yielding to Indian nationalist pressure was suicidal. Curzon declared, "For my own part I can say that any revocation or modification of the Partition of Bengal . . . would place a premium upon disloyal agitation in India in future and render the Government of India well nigh impossible: and future Secretaries of State would rue the day and would not forgive the man by whom that concession had been made."[1]

On the other side the radicals in the House of Commons warned the Secretary of State that the resentment against the Partition was not confined to the upper class Hindus, but was shared by all classes. Keir Hardie attacked the Government for the ill-advised and communally motivated measures and pointed out, "the Government of India is not surely reduced to the necessity of offending Hindu population in all parts of India in order to give the Muslims a semblance of power in a portion of one province."[2] Henry Cotton,[3] O'Grady, Ramsay MacDonald[4] supported the nationalist demand which was also supported by publicists like Nevinson,[5] Brailsford,[6] Ratcliffe[7] and Wilfred Scaven Blunt[8].

But the *Times* of London and the *Spectator* were supporters of the Partition along with the Conservative members of Parliament like J.D. Rees[9] and Sir George Birdwood. They favoured the measures of repression.

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[1] Curzon's speech, House of Lords, June 30, 1908. *H.L. Debates*,

[2] Hardie, Keir, *India: Impressions and Suggestions* (1909), pp. 10-11, 116-17

[3] Cotton, Sir H., House of Commons, January 26, 1905.

[4] MacDonald, Ramsay, House of Commons, June 6, 1907.

[5] Nevinson, H.W., *The New Spirit in India* (1908).

[6] Brailsford, H.W., *Subject India* (1943).

[7] Ratcliffe, S.K., *Wedderburn and the Indian Reform Movement.*

[8] Blunt, W.S., *My diaries: being a personal narrative of events,* 1881-1904.

[9] Rees, J.D., *The Real India* (1908).

Faced with these contradictory views Morley had no easy task in determining his course of action. He made up his mind, however, to give full support to the Government of India in their policy of repression, warning them from time to time against excessive severity. On the other hand, he made efforts to conciliate the members of Parliament belonging to his own Party in order to forestall any revolt against Government. So he used sweet reasonableness with individuals and calmed the dissatisfaction of the India lobby by skilful speeches using the art of judicious omission and commission. He was convinced that repression alone was no remedy for the kind of ills from which India suffered. He realised that without a gesture indicating sympathy for the views of the Indian nationalists British government would lose the willing support of the educated classes and its moral claim to rule.

The problem was exceedingly complex.

II. MORLEY'S HANDICAPS

Unfortunately neither Morley nor Minto who watched the waves of unrest rise and fall, was adequately equipped with the knowledge of India's ailments. They did not possess the breadth of constructive statesmanship to find the answer. They looked upon the tumult and the unrest that prevailed as a temporary nuisance, superficial froth and foam beaten up by disgruntled self-seeking agitators.

Morley the philosophic radical who had instinctive preference for change as against stagnation and for democratic institutions as opposed to autocratic ways, suffered from many handicaps. In the first place, the British society in which he lived was imperialistic in its general outlook. Then it entertained a very distorted image of the Indian people. Even the advanced socialists and labourites were averse to measures which might conceivably hurt the standards of living in Britain of the common man or reduce the worker's chances of employment. The capitalists were interested in buying cheap raw materials, selling their manufactured goods in the Indian market, and investing their capital in India to make profits which industry in Britain could not command; they opposed any policy which tended to relax control over Indian economy. India provided high salaried appointments to the British middle class youth, and they were naturally apprehensive of the loss of this advantage.

Secondly he had to deal with an overwhelmingly conservative House of Lords which was highly allergic to any suggestions of transfer of responsibility to Indians. Then, the British monarch though constitutionally neutral in politics exercised privately a lot of influence. The reigning King, Edward VII, possessed strong views about the Indian affairs and was opposed to all liberal proposals of change.

Again, Morley had to reckon with the Government of India whose British personnel — the official bureaucracy. was by and large paternalistic, autocratic and reactionary, straining at criticism and intolerant of opposition. The non-official European community — the business class, and its powerful press were opposed to any suggestion of increase of Indian influence in administration or government. The Governor General and Viceroy, Lord Minto, was a Curzonian imperialist without the nerve and energy of Curzon. He had warned Morley, "the very existence of our Raj in India depends upon the evidence of strength".[10] His Private Secretary noted in his diary, "the weakest chink in the world is to repress a little."[11]

Then there were certain features of Morley's intellect and character which stood in the way of success. He was indeed an eminent man of letters, a master of coruscating even biting phrase, he could enunciate high principles, but he yielded, though murmuringly, in the face of determined opposition, even foreswearing his cherished ideals to appease the demon of expediency.

Morley had no direct personal knowledge of the East and he had not studied its thought or history. He was thus a stranger to the task he had undertaken. For him India was a world as "vast as it is unfamiliar"[12] "the distance and the strangeness are formidable."[13]

He had never travelled in body or mind east of Suez and therefore his liberalism stopped on the western banks of De Lesseps' canal. He confessed "the real truth is that I am an Occidental, not an Oriental ; don't betray this fatal secret or I shall be ruined . I think I like Mohammedans, but I cannot go much further than that in an easterly direction."[14] Buchan adds, "indeed , he (Morley) had a strong distaste for all coloured races, and little imaginative insight into their moods and views."[15]

Austen Chamberlain records Morley's attitude about governing Indians in accordance with Indian ideas in his talk with a Labour M. P. Said he, "Indian ideas ! What are they? Caste (not exactly Labour's ideal), *purdah*, *sattee*, child marriage, female infanticide—these are Indian ideas. Govern India according to Indian ideas—what nonsense."[16]

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[10] Minto to Morley, 23 December 1909, cited in Das, M.N., *India under Morley and Minto* (London, 1964), p. 142.

[11] Gilbert Martin, *Servant of India*, being correspondence and Diaries of Sir James Dunlop Smith, p. 59.

[12] Morley to Frederick Harrison, 20 March 1906, quoted in Wolpert S., *Morley and India*, p. 28.

[13] Morley to Minto, 8 March 1906. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

[14] Buchan, J., *Lord Minto*, pp. 232-3. Letter to Lord Minto.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 222.

[16] Chamberlain, A., *Politics from within*, pp. 59-60.

Balfour's opinion regarding Morley was, "the trouble about dear John is that you can't trust him. He talks to you like this in private and then lets you down in public."[17]

These are the views of his political opponents, but the estimate of a liberal, Lady Oxford Asquith is not very different. She wrote : "although Morley was called Honest John, it was a deceptive description of him . . . His mind and nature were complicated and subtle. . . . He was too touchy, feminine, self-scanned and politically jealous to understand anyone so different from himself."[18]

Srinivasa Sastri described him as a fine argumentator, but indecisive and yielding.[19]

The other member of this team, Lord Minto, was a striking study in contrast. He was by no means a man of learning, nor a profound thinker. He possessed no literary graces. He was of the earth earthy, practical. He knew what he wanted and was tenacious in its pursuit. But he too was weak and lazy and he allowed himself to be led by his clever subordinates on whom he relied for preparing his briefs. He knew the tricks by which a weak man accomplishes his purposes. He could fully exploit the chinks in Morley's armour, playing upon his fears and intriguing with his political opponents. His prinicipal aim in India was to curb the nationalist forces which threatened to weaken the British domination, but he had the sense to realize that this could not be achieved by an indiscriminate heavy-handed attack on all opposition, but by a skillful division of the enemy forces and a dexterous combination of ruthlessness and affability. He showed great adroitness in overcoming the scruples and hesitations of his chief as well as the obstructive sullenness of his subordinates.

The attitude of the two towards the Indian problem was in effect similar, though their processes of reasoning were different. Morley had come to the conclusion that the unrest in India was more racial and social than political. According to his assessment, the Congress demand was more administrative than political, it desired greater access to higher administrative posts.[20] He thought that the British had antagonised the educated Indians in two ways—by social superciliousness and by contemptuous disparagement of Indian culture and civilization. The analysis was correct so far as it went, but it did not go far enough.

Again his understanding of the complexities of the Indian society was quite superficial. He not only shared the nineteenth century delusions of racial superiority of the whites, he was convinced that India being a country of many races, many languages, many religions and bewildering multiplicity of castes, wholly lacked the social basis of self-government.

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[17] *Ibid.*, p. 336.

[18] Countess of Oxford and Asquith, *Myself when Young*, p. 27.

[19] Round Table Conference, Sub-Committee, Part II, 1931.

[20] Minto Papers: Morley to Minto, August 2, 1906.

III. MORLEY'S VIEWS ON REFORMS

Morley was obsessed with the idea that the gulf between the two great communities of India was unbridgeable. In his speech on the second reading of Indian Council's Bill he reminded the Lords : "Let us not forget that the difference between Mahommedanism and Hinduism is not a mere difference of articles of religious faith or dogma. It is a difference in life, in tradition, in history, in all the social things as well as articles of belief, that constitute a community."[21]

Morley welcomed the formation of the Muslim League, a purely communal organisation with political aims, as a "native opposition to the Congress."

The inexorable logic of these views was that India was considered wholly unfit for representative self-government. This was made quite clear by Morley in the debate on the Indian Councils Bill in the House of Commons.

When Belfour told the House that according to him Morley's view was "not only is India not fit for representative Government, but unless I am not misrepresenting him, it is difficult to conceive how it ever can be fit."[22] Morley confirmed "he was quite right."[23]

Morley always spoke of India as a country of "nations". As early as June 1906, he wrote to Minto, "Fundamental difference between us, I believe, there is none. Not one whit more than you, do I think it desirable or possible, or even conceivable, to adapt English political institutions to the *nations* who inhabit India. Assuredly not in your day or mine."[24]

He agreed with Lee Warner's dictum, "that Indian society lives, thinks, and acts according to castes, races and religions," and cynically accepted the principle that "the Mahommedan community is entitled to a separate representation on the Council of the Governor General and Provincial Legislatures commensurate with its numbers and political and historical importance."[25]

In his first budget speech in the House of Commons he observed "I should not be taken to indicate for a moment that I dream you can transplant British institutions wholesale into India. You cannot transplant bodily the venerable oak of our constitution—the spirit, the temper, the principles and the maxims of British institutions. I do not insist that India should be on the same footing as our self-governing colonies like Canada."[26]

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[21] Morley, Viscount, Second Reading of Indian Councils Bill (House of Lords, 23 February 1909), Morley, *Indian Speeches*, pp. 126-27.

[22] Proceedings of the House of Commons, March 1909.

[23] Morley to Minto—Buchan's *Lord Minto*, p. 285.

[24] *Minto Papers* Morley to Minto, 6 June 1906.

[25] Secretary of State's despatch, 17 May 1907, cited in Wolpert, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

This was in reply to the demand of the Indian National Congress. About Gokhale who had been urging on Morley the desirability of granting self-government on the colonial model, in a letter to Lamington, the Governor of Bombay, Morley stated

"It is true that he had used language about National Autonomy, Self-Governing Colony, and so forth. But I regard all this as merely words and phrases for marking time or keeping his head above water. I had several talks with him last year, and he knows as well as you and I know, that to turn India into a self-governing colony to-day is absurd and will not be attempted."[27]

But what he really thought of Gokhale is recorded by him in 1907 while Gokhale was worrying over the coming split in the Congress :

"I have often thought during the last twelve months that Gokhale, as a party manager, is a baby. A party manager, or for that matter, any politician should never whine. Gokhale is always whining, just like the second-rate Irishman between Dan O'Connell and Parnell."[28]

In the budget speech of 1907 he reiterated, "India for a long time to come, so far as my imagination could reach, would be the theatre of absolute and personal government."[29]

In a speech to his constituents on 21 October 1907, he assailed the doctrine that whatever is good in the way of self-government for Canada, must be good for India, and said, "It is a thoroughly dangerous fallacy. I think it is the hollowest....what sophism could be more gross and dangerous."[30]

In the debate on reforms in the House of Lords on 17 December 1908, he assured the Lords, "if I were attempting to set up a Parliamentary system in India, or if it could be said, that this chapter of reform led directly or necessarily upto the establishment of a Parliamentary system in India, I, for one, would have nothing at all to do with it....a Parliamentary system in India is not the goal to which I for one moment would aspire."[31]

In his first letter on 15th June 1906 broaching the subject of reforms he wrote to Minto:

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[26] Morley, J., Budget Speech of 1906.

[27] Morley to Lamington 20 June 1907, cited in Wolpert, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

[28] *Morley Papers* : Morley to Minto, 31 October 1907.

[29] Morley, Viscount, 6 June 1907, *Indian Speeches* (Macmillan), p. 18.

[30] , *Ibidpp.*, 35-36. To Constituents (Arbroath, 21 October 1907).

[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92.

"I wonder whether we could not now make a good start in the way of reform in the popular direction. If we don't it is certain that the demands will widen and extend into 'national' reasons, which I at least look upon with a very doubtful and suspicious eye. Why should you not now consider as practical and immediate things—the extension of the native element in your Legislative Council, ditto in local councils: full time for discussing Budget in your L.C., instead of four or five skimpy hours; right of moving amendments ?"[32]

There is no mention of responsible government in the letter, and the items mentioned were the common platitudes of liberalism, which Morley had picked up partly from Minto's letters, partly from talks with Gokhale (who saw him in London in the spring of 1906) and partly from Indian sympathisers at home.[33]

In the despatch which the Secretary of State addressed to the Government of India on 17 May, 1907, the proposals are described as seeking "to improve existing machinery." It laid emphasis on the political aspect of the scheme—increase in the number of members of the Councils, providing majorities to the non-officials in the provincial councils. It gave recognition to the principle of representation of the people in the electoral system, but on the basis of "classes, races and interests."

There was no compromise on the question of British supremacy or Indian Participation in power.

In the final dispatch of 27 November, 1908, which was placed on the table of the House of Lords, the reforms were described as "a well guarded expansion of principles that were recognised in 1861 and 1892." It was vehemently asserted by Morley in the dispatch quoted above that it was no Parliamentary system.

Representative self-government was completely out of the question. Morley like the *Trimurti* (Indian three-headed god) had one face turned towards the Liberal party in the House of Commons, the second towards the Conservatives in the House of Lords, and the third towards the Indian National Congress aspiring for Swaraj. The triplicity of face was created by Morley himself; when reporting to Minto he referred to his Janus-like performance in Parliament; when in a mood of retrospection after retirement he read into his performance not what was actually done but what ought to have been.

Morley's habit of philosophising is also responsible for the misunderstanding. He talked of progress from 'the medieval reign of physical force to liberty', the reconciliation of liberty and autocracy; and he raised the fundamental question regarding the end and aim of British rule in India. His answer was, "surely in order to implant—slowly, prudently, judiciously—those ideas of justice, law, humanity, which are the foundation of our own civilisation."[34] His answer is of the same genre that Macaulay adumbrated about seventy years earlier.

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[32] *Minto Papers* : Morley to Minto, 15 June 1906.

Buchan, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

It is interesting to read what young Jawaharlal Nehru, then a student in England, wrote to his father:

"The Saturday Review...made a very wise remark a few weeks ago. It said that Indians were bound to have self-government, but—and herein lies the difficulty—not before a few aeons of geological time? ...The chief difficulty was the want of education and some million generations will be required to educate them (Indians) upto the colonial standard."[35]

IV. MINTO'S VIEWS

The more prosaic partner of Morley had no use for such highly sage talk. He was convinced Swaraj of Gokhale's conception was identical with chaos. He asked, "are the people to be handed over to a band of men of the type of Babu Bipin Chandra Pal?"[36] He did not think the Congress had the capability to undertake a part in the Government of India. Morley's assertion that if the reforms did not save the Raj nothing would, was controverted by Minto who asserted : "We shall fight for the Raj as hard as we have ever fought...and we shall win as we have always won".[37]

In the covering memorandum to the dispatch sent by the Government of India to the Secretary of State on 21 March, 1907, Minto made clear his attitude in the matter of reforms. He wrote:

"I am no advocate of "representative government for India." ... It would be a Western importation unnatural to Eastern tastes. ...The Government of India must remain autocratic; the sovereignty must be vested in British hands and cannot be delegated to any kind of representative assembly."[38]

To the suggestion of Morley that not the form of British Parliamentary institutions, but their spirit might be introduced in the administration, Minto's reaction was that the principle of autocracy and the principle of constitutionalism might be fused in the system of constitutional autocracy.[39] Autocracy was to be maintained by crushing the party which demanded self-government, and by conciliating the aristocratic elements and moderate men who "will range themselves on the side of the Government and will oppose any further shifting of the balance of power and any attempt to democratise Indian institutions."[40]

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[34] *Minto Papers*: Morley to Minto, 7 October 1908.

[35] Norman, D. (ed.), *Jawaharlal Nehru : First Sixty Years*, vol I, p. 16.

[36] Quoted in M.N. Das, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

[37] *Minto Papers:* Minto to Morley, 17 May 1908.

[38] Mary, Countess of Minto, *India, Minto and Morley*, p 110.

[39] *Ibid.*

[40] *Minto Papers:* Minto to Morley, 21 March 1907.

Minto explained, "constitutional autocracy binds itself to govern by rule, admits and invokes to its councils representatives of all the interests which are capable of being represented. (But) it reserves to itself the predominant and absolute power."[41]

Hence his proposals were : (1) a Council of Princes as a consultative body, (2) enlargement of the central and local councils and constituting them on the basis of race, community and interests. In this way he watered down the representation of professions in the Council Act of 1892 and increased the representation of (a) landholders, (b) merchants and industrialists, (c) Muslims in separate electorates and in excess of their proportion in the population.

By the constitutional principle he meant the enlargement of the functions of the Councils—adequate opportunity for budget debates, moving resolutions, putting questions and interpellation, and the recognition of the principle of representation.

The aim of the reforms according to both Morley and Minto was greater association of Indians with the Government. Morley's anxiety was, "we are all in a cleft stick, we don't know the minds of the Natives, and the Natives don't know what is in our minds. How to find some sort of a bridge? That's the question."[42]

Minto proposed the solution, namely, the appointment of an Indian to the Governor General's Executive Council. Morley preferred the association of Indians in the Council of the Secretary of State. As both desired to find a bridge, they agreed and decided to have Indians on both the Councils.

V. REFORMS PROPOSALS

After long delays and interminable discussions the Secretary of State and the Government of India agreed upon the scheme of reforms which embodied Minto's conception of 'constitutional autocracy'. It did not affect the supremacy of the imperial power in the slightest degree and hence maintained the autocratic character of Government. But it fulfilled the need towards which Hume had drawn the attention of Dufferin more than twenty years earlier, and to which Morley had alluded, namely, Government's lack of knowledge regarding Indian opinion. The Congress which Hume thought would fulfil this need was inadequate, for it met only once a year, while in the new era of stir and turmoil when events moved fast and opinions changed rapidly, it was necessary to devise machinery which could keep Government informed continuously and from day to day.

The Councils were enlarged and their functions extended. They comprised in part of members elected by constituencies—small and narrow indeed. But in the provincial Councils the Indian element was increased.

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[41] *Ibid.*

[42] *Minto Papers:* Morley to Minto, 16 May 1907.

The elected members represented group opinions, as the Government neither believed that India was a nation nor intended the growth of nationality.

In fact, one of the main purposes of the reforms was to create a counterpoise to the Congress which stood and worked for national unity. Both Morley and Minto were keen on rallying the loyal elements—that is, the groups which wanted to perpetuate British rule in India, support the foreign government in maintaining its hold upon the country, and to discourage and indeed obstruct the educated class, which was engaged in the tremendously difficult task of building a nation and about which Burke had observed:

"How weary a step do those take who endeavour to make out of a great mass a brave political personaity."[43]

Earlier in his correspondence with Morley on the subject of reforms Minto had declared what his intention was. He wrote, "We are here a small British garrison surrounded by millions composed of factors of an inflammability unknown to the western world, and we must be physically strong or go to the wall."[44]

In order to avert this danger it was necessary to think "of a possible counterpoise to Congress aims."[45] The most effective counterpoise, apart from the Council of Princes, was to win over the Muslims to the support of Government, and to undermine the feeling of a growing nationality which was "already doing much to unite Hindus and Mahommedans in a common cause."[46]

Minto had laid the foundation of this policy when on 1 October, 1906 he assured the Muslim Deputation that because the system of election or nomination to the Legislative Councils prevailing hitherto had failed to give the Muslims adequate protection, he was in favour of accepting their claim to representation not only commensurate with their numerical strength, but with their political importance and the value of the contribution which they made to the empire. He recognised also their right to send their own representatives through separate electorates. He asseverated "any electoral representation in India would be doomed to mischievous failure which aimed at granting a personal enfranchisement regardless of the beliefs and traditions of the communities composing the population of the continent."[47] Morley gave his assent to Minto's promises.

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[43] Wolpert, *op. cit.*, p. 4[illegible]

[44] *Minto Papers:* Minto to Morley, 28 May 1906.

[45] *Ibid.*

[46] Minto's Memorandum, 21 March 1907, cited in Lady Minto, *op. cit.*

[47] Minto's reply to the Muslim Deputation." Lady Minto, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47

Thus the Trojan horse of communalism was driven into the slowly rising citadel of nationalism. It succeeded in breaking the citadel into two, but at what cost? The destruction of the territorial integrity of India, and at the same time the ruin of the imperial structure, in the interest of whose stability communalism had been pushed up, in less than 40 years.

The provision of separate and excessive representation for the Muslim community was from the Indian point of view the most objectionable feature of the scheme of reconstruction. Morley had accepted it in a general way, in an irresponsible mood, because of Minto's insistence.[48] But his liberal conscience began to prick as soon as he started looking at it closely. He found difficulties in giving effect to the principle, which cut at the very root of representative self-government. So he proposed a new formula which would diminish the evil effects of the undiluted system of divided electorates, *viz.*, the formation of mixed electoral colleges. These colleges were to be composed of Hindus and Muslims in proportion to the numbers of representatives assigned to each community. But the members of the colleges were to be chosen by mixed general electorates of landowners, rural boards, district boards, municipal committees and so forth. The college so constituted would elect representatives to the legislative councils in the proportion fixed for Hindus and Muslims.

The scheme contemplated one college for each constituency and the representation of all the classes and communities of the locality. It sought to ensure the adequate representation of each community without dividing them into separate electorates.

Morley's proposal negatived the purpose of the Government of India and ran counter to the policies and promises of Minto. The Governor General naturally took strong exception to the scheme and raised the bogey of Muslim revolt. He argued that the loyal Mahommedans—the mainstay of Government, would be left in the lurch, and the younger Mahommedans would be thrown into the vortex of political agitation. He wrote to Morley, "Mahommedan electorates are absolutely necessary—if we retreat at all from that view, we shall have an infinitely worse trouble than anything that can arise from Hindu opposition."[49]

The poltergeist of *Jihad* unnerved Morley and as usual he capitulated. He accepted Minto's proposal about separate representation in toto. The Muslim community thus not only retained the separate electorates but also an additional share from the general electorates and from nomination.

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[48] Despatch of 19 May 1907, from the Secretary of State to the Government of India, para 26.

[49] Minto to Morley, 7 April 1909, cited in Gilbert, M., op. cit., p. 173.

The curtain was rung down on the Parliamentary drama when on May 25, 1909 the House of Commons set its seal of approval on Morley's India Council Bill, and placed it on the Statute Book.

VI. RECEPTION OF REFORMS

How did people in England and India receive this measure? It was described by Morley in the House of Lords as an extension of the principles on which the Acts of 1861 and 1892 were based. The description was in substance correct. The Indian Councils Act, 1909, like its predecessors did not confer any responsibility for government or power of altering, modifying, or negating the decisions of the Government of India. It only extended the opportunities of debate, discussion and eliciting of information. On the other hand, it decisively extended the division between the Hindu and Muslim communities.

The British Conservatives regarded it as a revolutionary measure, wholly unnecessary and indeed harmful. Arthur Balfour, the leader of the Conservative Party in opposition in Parliament, referring to Morley's declarations about the unfitness of Indians for representative government, asked, "why you should do everything to make assemblies, which are not representative, and which you do not intend to make representative, mimics of all the worst and most laborious parts of our procedure, that I admit absolutely passes my comprehension"[50].

But the Radical Parliamentarians like Cotton and Rutherford welcomed the Act as an "instalment, though a moderate one, of self-gevernment"[51].

In India, Minto stated in the Imperial Legislative Council, "we have distinctly maintained that representative Government in its Western sense is totally inapplicable to the Indian Empire and would be uncongenial to the traditions of the Eastern population"[52].

The Indian National Congress consisting of the Moderates met in December 1908 in Madras, just after Morley had introduced his bill in Parliament on 17 December, 1908 and unreservedly welcomed the reforms. It resolved, "The Congress desires to give expression to the deep and general satisfaction with which the Reform proposals formulated in Lord Morley's despatch have been received throughout the country; it places on record its sense of high statesmanship which has dictated the action of the Government in the matter and it tenders to Lord Morley and Lord Minto its most sincere and grateful thanks for their proposals"[53].

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[50] *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons,* 1 April, 1909., vol., III, col. 557

[51] *Ibid.*

[52] *Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Governor-General of India,* 25 January 1910.

[53] Report of the Indian National Congress, 1908, Resolution II. *The Indian National Congress,* Natesan, G.A., 2nd edition, part II, p. 127.

Rash Behari Ghosh, the President, rhapsodised: The clouds "are now breaking in blessings over your heads, slaking the parched and thirsty earth. English statesmanship which, as Lord Morley justly boasted, has never yet failed in any part of the world, has risen to its fullest height at this critical time, and has seized the golden moment, for it knows the season when to take occasion by the hand, not to suppress but to guide the new spirit which England has created in India."[54]

Unfortunately the jubilation proved premature. Morley's surrender on the question of Muslim representation came to the Moderate Congressmen as a great shock. The paean of praise turned into a dirge of distress. Madan Mohan Malaviya presiding over the Congress at Lahore in December 1909 exclaimed "This is protecting the interests of a minority with vengeance. It looks more like a case of allowing the majority to be driven to a corner by a minority......The Hindu minorities in the two provinces (Panjab and Eastern Bengal and Assam) have been left out severely in the cold."[55] He cautioned "the Regulations for the first time in the history of British rule have recognised religion as a basis of representation, and have thus raised a wall of separation between the Mahomedan and non-Mahomedan subjects of His Majesty."[56]

The principal nationalist leaders were either behind the bars or in exile, but their reaction could be easily guessed. If the Reforms were intended to pacify unrest and pour oil over troubled waters, they failed. The froth and foam may have somewhat subsided as a result of repression, but the deep rolling flood continued to flow. The vicious chain of violence, repression and more violence was not broken. The mists of doubt and apprehension gathered on the horizon. Valentine Chirol wrote to Lady Minto:

"The Reforms, likewise are a palliative which may for a time keep the political opportunists on the fence. But they do not touch the root of the evil."[57]

The Montagu-Chelmsford Report acknowledged the failure of the Morley-Minto scheme. It stated, "the reforms of 1909 afford no answer and could afford no answer to Indian political problems."[58]

VII. Muslims Welcome Reforms

The only party which was satisfied with the reforms was the Muslim League, for they had gained what they wanted. Their exultation was, however, based on short-sightedness. Minto and Dunlop Smith—his Private Secretary and counsellor, shield and trumpeter of Minto,[59] and their host of admirers and supporters were highly gratified. They believed it was necessary to appease the Muslims even at the risk of losing the goodwill of the Hindus. Lovat Fraser wrote to Dunlop Smith; "our greatest danger in India is the likelihood of an entente so much desired by many of the younger and abler Mahommedans, between Hindus and Musalmans. Men like the Aga Khan plainly feel that in pressing for large separate treatment for Mahommedans, they are fighting our battle much more than their own. We have far more to lose than the Muslims by an entente between Islam and Hinduism."[60]

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[54] *Ibid.*, Part I, p. 900.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 943.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 955.

[57] Gilbert, M., *op. cit.*, p. 236, Letter of Valentine Chirol to Lady Minto. 4 May1910.

[58] *Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms* (1918), pp. 68-69.

The Muslim was loyal. Had not Muhammad Shafi, a leading lawyer of Lahore and one of the founders of the Muslim League, assured Dunlop Smith, "I am sincerely convinced that the interests of the Mahommedan community in India are absolutely identical with those of the Government?"[61]

The British were frightened by the tendency among Muslim youngmen to sympathise with Congress aims—a danger sedulously played up by both British officials and non-officials and the reactionary Muslim leaders on both Morley and Minto. They came to think that the growth of national unity and of the popularity of the Indian National Congress constituted a grave danger to the British empire, which could only be averted by rallying the loyal elements and specially by appeasing the Muslims. The spectre of Muslim revolt so alarmed Morley that he resiled from all radicalism.

Were the apprehensions of the Government of India genuine, or merely a cloak for their deeper designs? Were they really afraid of a possible Muslim revolt or just anxious to drive a wedge between the communities to ensure the stability of the Raj?

The answer must be sought in an analysis of the situation in India in the first decade of the century. In the first place till 1906 there was no Muslim organisation in existence which, like the Indian National Congress, could lead and direct the community in political agitation against Government, although ten years later it was different.

The Muslim League which came into existence on December 31, 1906, was in the stage of infancy. It comprised a number of upper class Muslims. They had some following among the land-holding class and among Muslims who had received higher education and who were mainly drawn from this class. Aligarh was the stronghold and the base of the Muslim League.

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[59] Gilbert, M., states, "Dunlop Smith encouraged Minto to rely on and to foster the loyalty of certain groups of Indians, in particular the Princes and the Muslims. "He persuaded Minto to believe Indian nationalism was a passing phenomenon." p. 252.

[60] Gilbert, M., *op. cit.*, p. 202, Lovat Fraser to Dunlop Smith, 20 July 1909.

[61] *Ibid.*, p. 177.

The Musalmans of this class—many of them descendants of families which had played prominent roles in pre-British days, felt mortified when they compared their inferior status in trade, industry, wealth and education and the inadequacy of their share in government services, professions and representative bodies—legislatures, senates of the universities, District and Municipal Boards, etc., with the advanced position which the Hindu had achieved in these walks of life. Although both the Muslim leaders and the Government acknowledged the general backwardness of the community compared to the Hindus, the backwardness was galling to their self-respect and the desire for betterment so ardent as to push aside all considerations of merit.

The rulers took advantage of the Muslim anxieties and apprehensions. The fear of the large Hindu majority which could work to the detriment of the minority in a representative system was instilled in their minds. In this the Muslim leaders showed little foresight. For them the concept of self-government was the vainest of dreams. The belief in the eternity of British rule was an article of faith with them. They were oblivious of the fact that they had to live in any case with the majority community in India, whether the British remained or went. This willy nilly coexistence required a spirit of compromise and of give and take. They failed to realize that attachment to the foreigner implied the perpetuation of a system of government based on economic exploitation of India, and the poverty and misery of the Muslim masses. They opposed the Indian National Congress on the advice of their British friends without considering what the Congress broadly stood for. In order to secure some immediate advantages for their class, they agreed to play the game of those who had little regard for the real welfare or dignity of their community.

That the rulers did not entertain a high opinion of such leaders is abundantly manifest from the opinion which Morley and Minto expressed in their correspondence in regard to them. For instance, Minto wrote about the Aga Khan that he knew more about second class music halls of Europe than about Indian affairs.

According to Morley, Ameer Ali was an egotistical windbag who was fishing for a knighthood. Yet the Aga Khan wrote in a vainglorious mood to Dunlop Smith, the Private Secretary of Minto.

"I have asked all the members of the Muslim Deputation......to form a permanent committee, and I have given to my old friend Muhsinul Mulk who as you know is a most loyal and zealous Mohammedan, certain instructions regarding the method by which he is to proceed......

I have also asked him not to move in any matter before first finding out if the step to be taken has the full approval of Government privately."[62]

Muhsinul Mulk was equally exuberant in subservience. He told Dunlop Smith after the Deputation that the speech of Minto "has put a new heart in us, and will always, with gratitude, be treasured by us and our posterity as a historical declaration of the policy of the Indian Government."[63]

How the Muslim ambitions were incited and the separatist demands encouraged is told by Gilbert:

"As a result of the favourable reception of their Deputation in October the Muslims were swift to assert their claims to special community representation in any electoral system."[64]

Lawrence Jenkins, Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court, unfolds another explanation of the attitude of the Government of India on Muslim representation. He wrote to Morley, "many in India who championed the Muslim demands did so "because they consider it the most effective mode of thwarting your scheme."[65]

Even Minto, the godfather of Muslim separatism, was frightened by the frankenstein he had himself conjured up for his aid. He complained to Morley, "the Muhammadan agitation has been engineered from home ", and confessed, "I cannot see that they are in the least entitled to the number of seats that will now be allotted to them."[66]

Morley too was shaken. He realized that his approval of separate and excessive representation to the Muslims was a piece of sophistry and subterfuge, and that between his words and policies there could be detected "irreconcilable inconsistencies". But he consoled himself "by remembering that it was you (Minto) who set the troublesome ball rolling in a famous speech."[67]

Unfortunately in protesting their loyalty to the British Raj the Hindu Sabha and the Moderate leaders equalled the Muslim League. All three importuned ~~the~~ Government to concede their request for a larger share of Government favours and in administrative reforms. All three used the same argument in support of their demands—the loyal elements would be encouraged, the impatient youth rescued from the clutches of the Extremists and the Extremists shorn of their popularity and influence.

It is extremely revealing that the Government accepted only the claims of the Muslim League leaders at their face value, but rejected the identical requests of the other two. Madan Mohan Malaviya made a great grievance of it in his presidential address at Lahore.[68]

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[62] Gilbert, M., *op. cit.*, p. 57.

[63] *Ibid.*,

[64] *Ibid.*, pp. 172-73.

[65] *Ibid.*, p. 199. Sir L. Jenkins to Morley, 15 September 1909, cited in Wolpert op. cit., p. 199.

[66] Wolpert, *op. cit.*, p. 198. Minto to Morley, 11 November 1909

[67] *Morley Papers:* Morley to Minto, 28 April 1909

The reason was obvious. In the year 1908, the policy of the Government was to build up the League in opposition to the Congress irrespective of the merits of their case or the strength of their following. There is no doubt that the Government was aware that the Muslim masses were either indifferent or ignorant or under the influence of the *Ulama* (theological scholars), who were opposed to Western education and were anti-British in politics. It was also within Government's knowledge that the Indian nationalist movement had been secular in character from the beginning. If in spite of this knowledge, Government chose to disregard the Indian National Congress and nationalist opinion, to consign such leaders as Tilak, Lajpat Rai, Aurobindo Ghose to prison, and to show preferential treatment to hangers-on of the Muslim League, the inference is clear.

The Government was anxious to counteract the rising mass movement which threatened the existence of irresponsible authority and demanded an end to exploitation. In the Muslims they found a counterpoise which could effectively serve their purposes.

Dunlop Smith wrote about the Indian nationalist movement to Lady Minto, "there is hardly a country in Asia where there is not a strong national movement going on. It has manifested itself in India in many unmistakable ways, but until lately, it was not at all religious in character......the national movement was at first non-religious. But the leaders soon found that they could not carry either their own women or the masses with them on purely secular lines. So, of late, there has been a somewhat rapid Hinduising of national ideas, especially, among the younger men, and the religious element has become infused into the political."[69]

The infusion was lucky for the Government. It could exploit the religious differences for its own advantage. It made use of them to provide plausible justification for communal representation. Dunlop Smith advised Minto to tell the objectors of separate electorates that the Indian Mahommedans "are much more than a religious body. They form, in fact, an absolutely separate community, distinct by marriage, food and custom and claiming in many cases to belong to a different race."[70]

The argument went home. The Muslim Leaguers began to believe it. Religion became the handmaid of politics. The seed of separatism thus sown was watered by lack of understanding, unwisdom and chauvinistic attitude of some sections of the Hindus. It was nourished by the

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[68] Malaviya, M.M., Presidential Address, Indian National Congress, 1909.

[69] Gilbert, M., *op. cit.*, p. 135. Letter from Dunlop Smith to Lady Minto, 11 March 1908.

[70] *Ibid.*, p. 189.

British imperialist interests. The Muslim League had become conscious that they were a prize for which the Indian nationalists and the Government were both competing, and they started bargaining for their price.

The Morley-Minto Reforms did not concede real constitutional rights but that was perhaps not vital, for the need for advance had been forced upon the recognition of the rulers. What was condemnable about them however was their emphasis upon the principles of community and group interests as the foundation of the future political arrangements in India. The principle of separate representation amounted to a denial of Indian nationalism.

Dunlop Smith taunted the nationalists, "if the growth of nationality can be stopped or even retarded by what is after all a piece of electoral mechanism, nationality in India is not the force which its advocates and promoters make out."[71]

But separate electorates were not the principal cause of trouble. For although many nationalists condemned them, some agreed with Gokhale that as a temporary measure they had to be tolerated. The exploitation of religious sentiments in the elections in the past was an evil which had to be exorcised, otherwise the chances of the Muslim minority to compete successfully for the votes of the electors were obviously meagre.[72]

The more iniquitous feature of the scheme was the excessive representation conceded to the Muslims on the utterly untenable ground of their claim to superiority in service to Government and Indian historical tradition. This was both false in fact and insulting to the *amour propre* of the other communities, especially the Hindus, who were far more advanced in education, economy, services and political organisation than the Muslims.

Another equally vicious feature was the differentiation in the matter of the qualifications of the candidates and the inequalities in the Regulations concerning the franchise.

These three were the main bones of contention. They incited among the communities greed, jealousy, fear and antipathy on both sides. The advocates used exaggerated and offensive language in denunciation or approval of the system.

The Morley-Minto Reforms thus created a gulf which was never bridged.

Unfortunately the nationalism of India did not prove equal to the forces of corruption and hate let loose by imperialism.

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[71] *Ibid.*

[72] Speeches of G.K. Gokhale and Shamsul Huda in the Imperial Legislative Council, Calcutta, January 24, 1911, on the motion of Madan Mohan Malaviya regarding the Council Regulations.

The bogey of *Jihad* was conjured up to frighten Morley and the Liberal party. But there was hardly any possibility of rousing the Muslim masses to declare holy war in order to win a few more seats in the Councils. The Ulama who could have given the signal for such a war were quite indifferent to the manoeuvrings of English educated loyalists like the Aga Khan, Muhsinul Mulk and their associates. They were pursuing in politics aims far more radical and far more risk-involving than what the aristocratic leaders were prepared for. The Ulama had never responded to the advances of the Aligarh School of politicians in the past and without their active aid no mass movement was likely to take off the ground.

The first phase of the struggle for independence ended with the reforms. It marked the beginning of new developments in Indian affairs.

VIII. Effects of the Reforms

The Morley-Minto Reforms brought about a number of changes. One of them affected the relations of the Secretary of State and the Governor-General. On assuming office Morley reminded Minto that the Liberal elections of 1906 had utterly changed the centre of gravity, and that he was not going to walk blindfolded in the ways of bureaucracy. He pressed the view that all members of the Government of India were "servants and agents of Parliament", and his practice was based upon this maxim.

Minto did not openly dispute this legally correct view, nevertheless he did not relish the inferior position to which the Secretary of State wanted to consign the Government of India. He complained, "the modern House of Commons is absolutely incapable of understanding Indian humanity and the influence of many creeds and traditions, and is to my mind perhaps the greatest danger to the continuance of our rule in this country."[73]

Morley asserted, "The Cabinet, through a Secretary of State, have an inexpugnable right, subject to law, to dictate policy, to initiate instructions, to reject proposals, to have the last word in every question that arises, and the first word in every question that in their view ought to arise."[74]

So far as Minto's charge against Parliament was concerned, Morley turned the tables by asserting that the unrest in India was due to the *Tchinovniks* (the bureaucrats) who had been ruling India for the past fifty years, with their outmoded ideas and methods. Minto protested "as far as I can see it is largely believed in England that India is and can be ruled from home. It can be ruined from home, and will be, if parliamentary influences are allowed to grow."[75] Morley stoutly denied this.

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[73] Wolpert, *op. cit.*, p. 46; Minto to Morley, 27 May 1908.

[74] Wolpert, *op. cit.*, p. 73. Morley's essay on British Democracy and Indian Government.

It is not necessary to discuss the rights and wrongs of the controversy, but it showed the cracks in the existing system of government of India. Obviously the crisis in India had upset the chariot which was drawn by two horses pulling in two different directions. It happened, therefore, that both imperialist philosophy and autocratic administration proved inadequate in solving the problem of the new spirit in India.

The second important result was the appearance of a psychological change of great magnitude in India. The Indian mind threw overboard the heavy load of imperial awe and prestige. The young men by their daring and sacrifice removed the miasma of the efficacy of the chastising power of Government, the defiant attitude of those who were condemned to death, imprisonment and exile, blunted the edge of the weapon upon which Government relied.

The movement stirred the country from one end to the other. A new sense of common purpose and united endeavour to achieve it spread. The dynamism which was generated forced the Government into a defensive position. Initiative began to pass from Britain to India. As the Indian morale rose the morale of the ruling class started to decline. The era of British self-confidence was followed by an era of doubt. Morley as a philosopher and historian contemplated, "no world empire had lasted for ever and was doubtful whether the British empire had many years of life before it." He realized "the longer one stares at India. the more grim and ugly it all is"[76] He found growing estrangement and lessening sympathy between the British officials and the Indians.

Minto, a robust soldier who vaunted that the Raj would be maintained with the strong arm of the British nation, admitted, "we all feel that we are mere sojourners in the land, that we are only camping and on the march. Everyone is looking forward to a well-earned rest at home at last."[77] Chirol observed, "Amongst Anglo-Indian administrators a state of profound discouragement has come to prevail which I cannot help regarding as one of the most lamentable features of the situation."[78]

IX. People's Reaction

The first decade of the twentieth century was the springtide of the struggle for freedom. The winter of humiliation and hibernation was over at last. Life had broken through the hard crust of custom and tradition.

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[75] Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 223; Minto's letter to Dunlop Smith, 24 March 1910.

[76] Wolpert, *op. cit.* p. 48. Morley to Minto, 3 October 1907.

[77] *Minto Papers:* Minto to Morley, 24 July 1907.

[78] Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 237. Valentine Chirol to Lady Minto, 4 May 1910.

The awakening was initiated in a riot of life, form and colour. Man's nature had taken a sudden leap forward. Rabindranath Tagore had struck the notes of joy which brought the glad tidings of liberty and emancipation. Bal Gangadhar Tilak with the sharp edge of his prose had cut the net of the imperialist illusion which bound the Indian mind. Aurobindo Ghose lighted the fiery torch which warmed youthful hearts and sent the blood tingling through the veins. Bipin Chandra Pal's thunderous rhetorical speeches sounded loud on the beaches and vied with the roar of ocean waves breaking on the shore. Others jointed the orchestra. Lajpat Rai's thrilling words echoed throughout the cities and villages of the martial Panjab. Madan Mohan Malaviya, the orator with the silver tongue, recalled in his mellifluous speeches the glories of ancient India. Gokhale, the Knight, whose heart was pure, called the youth to the service of the motherland. Meanwhile Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was leading the unexampled movement of Satyagraha to vindicate the honour of India in far-off South Africa.

Iqbal of this dawn was bravely contributing to the symphony of patriotic music with his immortal paean of glorious India—*Sare Jahan se accha Hindustan hamara.*

In the midst of this stimulating scene signs appeared which portended misfortune. The establishment of the Muslim League indicated that all was not well and that in the body politic there existed unrecognised germs of illness which could end in disaster.

The fierce glow of these marvellous years soon began to fade. Some of the great luminaries who had brightened the sky were hid in clouds. Tilak had been whisked away to the prison house in Mandalay, Aurobindo walked the corridors of mysticism in search of the superconscious in the French enclave of Pondicherry, Bipin Chandra Pal found a haven of rest in the crowded obscurity of London, Lajpat Rai sojourned for the duration of the war in the United States of America, where rebels against oppression gathered from many lands.

The shadow of the coming World War had also begun to darken the horizon of the western lands. The appearance of calm on the heaving waters of India and of the world was not destined to last very long. The second phase of the struggle was not far off.

CHAPTER NINE

THE MUSLIM PROBLEM

From the end of the eighteenth century to the middle of the twentieth the Muslims of India passed through a number of stages in the process of social and political development. The process was from an abstract universalism to concrete self-conscious nationalism.

The first stage was preceded by the entire period of Muslim history, which extended from the thirteenth to the middle of the eighteenth century. During this period the Muslims constituted a mutiplicity of races, tribes, castes, linguistic and regional groups. They were also divided into classes :

1. The fighters and rulers who performed the function of executive government; they appropriated the higher services—largely military, and owned assignments of land on various tenures tending to become hereditary;
2. The learned, the Ulama who studied Islamic sciences, dispensed civil and criminal justice, issued legal decrees, administered religious endowments, performed priestly functions and rites like marriage, divorce, funeral ceremonies, prayers, etc., and provided office personnel where educational qualifications were required;
3. The intermediate class, consisting of managers of large scale trade, especially with foreign countries, suppliers of court and army requirements, entrepreneurs or masters of art and craft guilds, bankers, etc;
4. The workers *viz.*, peasants, artisans, craftsmen, labourers etc.

The Muslims of the fighter class living in the different regions of India had no political or social coherence or consciousness of common interests. If they showed loyalty to a strong central ruler, it was not on the ground of community of faith but because of sheer compulsion. They were, however, always conspiring to rebel against the monarch either to establish their own independent principalities or to support a rival of the sovereign. The ability to crush the rebels was the test of capacity to rule. In the politics of the empire and the principalities the large majority of Musalmans was not interested. The game of politics was confined to a small number—the members of the ruling class, the aristocratic families and a few important *ulama*; not religion but blood-relationship or kinship was the tie which bound the members of a social group, and political allegiance and obedience was based on loyalty to the person of the ruler.

Religion played a peripheral part in state affairs, nor did religion provide any irresistible urge for political unity. In fact, Muslim history shows that political pluralism is almost as old as Islam itself. The rivalry between the Ansars and the Mahajirin, the Hashimids and the Umayyads and between the Sunnis and the Shiites and the Kharijites belongs to the very first century of the Hijra. In the second century the conflict of the Umayyads against the Abbasids and the Shuubiya movement against the ascendancy of the Arabs and still later the assertion of autonomy by the Spanish Umayyads, the Fatimids of Egypt, the Tahirids, Safavids and Samanids of Khorasan, and others furnish adequate illustrations of the inability of Islam to maintain the unity of the *millat* (community), even during the heyday of Islamic civilisation. After the decline of the Baghdad Caliphate in the tenth century and the rise of the independent states in the east and the west, although ideological universalism of Islam continued, its political unity was rent into pieces.

Theological political theory had to reconcile itself with the new conditions. The Asharite formula of the unity of the Umma and the centra authority of the Khalifa was modified. Al Mawardi composed his book on politics — *Ahkam as Sultanieh*, during the regime of the Persian warlords, the Buwaihids who had reduced the Caliphate to an appendage of the Sultan. While upholding mildly the authority of the Caliph he recognised clearly the actual independence of the Sultan, the holder of military power. Later writers stressed the differentiation between the *Khilafat*, *Imamat* and *Sultanat*.

In India this tendency was brought to its culminating point by the Mughal Emperors who refused to accept the Ottoman Sultan as the Caliph or the surpreme religious chief of all the Muslims. Thus in the 18th century political pluralism based on dynastic, tribal, local and sectarian foundations was combined with a somewhat debilitated religious universalism.

This state of affairs has some resemblance with conditions in Europe of the fifteenth century, when territorial communities were arising in western Europe which ultimately ripened into self-conscious nations. They had all a common religion, Christianity, but in spite of the efforts of the Papacy and the Empire they failed to unite into one Christian state.

The Muslim empires centred at Delhi made similar endeavours, but they were more inspired by such secular aims as glory, wealth and power than religious zeal.

This, however, did not imply that there was a merger of the different religions in India as had happened in the ancient times. The fact is that the Muslims retained the awareness that they were a separate religious community differing in belief and ritual from other communities.

that their personal laws were distinct and had to be administered by their own jurists, in accordance with *Quran* and *Hadith* whose teachings were binding on every Muslim. Then there was a class of the learned *Ulama* – the interpreters of the tenets and laws of Islam, which formed a universal fellowship of the learned all over the Muslim world, especially of Central and Western Asia and Northern Africa. In spite of such common features the Muslim classes other than the learned were obliged by the conditions of life in India to come under the influence of their Indian environment in varying degrees. The conquerors who came from Central Asia with a religion and culture in many ways diverse and even contrary, gradually evolved a number of common customs and common characteristics of culture.

It is not necessary to mention all of them here[1]. But the adoption of the regional Indian languages by the Muslims is of great significance. For if language is the medium of expression of emotion and thought, it necessarily affects both. It is, therefore, not at all surprising that the literature produced by the Hindus and the Muslims in the Indian languages shows remarkable closeness, mutual understanding and similarity of attitude and feeling.

Moreover, the intercourse between the members of the two communities affected their religion and social mores, and the two borrowed from each other many customs, manners, etc. They not only took some externalia of religion, but also some of the basic tenets, beliefs and attitudes. Needless to say the borrowings at different social levels were not identical in quality or quantity.

The Muslims in India then were an inorganic mass of numerous groups with a potentiality for realising their communal unity. But there was another characteristic of this social evolution, namely, the growth of an ambivalent—identity and difference, attitude towards the the other groups—especially the majority of the people professing the Hindu religion. Correspondingly there were liberal and conservative theologians—the first tending to mitigate and the second to accentuate differences between the communities. In the field of politics Akbar and Aurangzeb represent the two tendencies.

During the second stage beginning in the middle of the eighteenth century, a new stage of social evolution was inaugurated. The conquest of India by the British which began in 1757 and the political and administrative policies of the Government, were responsible for the changes which took place during this period.

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[1] On this subject reference may be made to:

(1) Tara Chand, *The Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, and the books mentioned in the Bibliography.

(2) Muhammad Umar, Dr., *Burhan* (Urdu), 1968, 1969, and 1970 (Vols.) 60, 61, 62, 63 and 64).

The Muslim aristocratic ruling class was almost annihilated as principality after principality ruled by the Muslim dynasties was either wholly destroyed and annexed or deprived of its autonomy and brought under subordination. The ruling families either disappeared or were humbled.

The tornado of 1857 completed the work of ruination. The phantom which was the existing relic of the once mighty Mughal empire was swept away, the *roi faineant* of Oudh was exiled from his kingdom to dwell as a state prisoner at Calcutta, and many great and small holders of landed estates were deprived of their properties and meted out harsh punishments. Others were reduced to the status of mere landholding gentry.

The men of learning, some of whom had taken a prominent part in the Revolt, had to pay dearly for the defeat of their cause, especially in the northern regions round Delhi, in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. In Bengal many of them had been reduced to a state of penury as a result of the general ruin of the Muslim princes and landlords. Their successors were the most inveterate enemies of the British Raj.

The intermediate class was adversely affected by the passing of Indian trade into the hands of the East India Company, and the British and European merchants.

The artisan class was exposed to a dual attack—one, from the vicious policy of tariffs followed by the British government in the early stages of the Industrial Revolution, and second, from the competition of the factory-made goods after the Industrial Revolution. The result was the decline of Indian domestic industry and the impoverishment of the artisans, who were mostly Muslims.

Thus all the Muslim classes of India were involved in a common calamity. It is not surprising, therefore, that sharing in their identical misfortunes originating from a common source, the Muslims should have experienced a common feeling of sympathy for their coreligionists and a community of interests all over India.

Apart from what happened to the Muslims in India, the 19th century witnessed the subversion of Muslim states all over the world—in Europe, Africa and Asia. The rivalry of Britain, France and Russia and the greed for imperial expansion were mainly responsible for the troubles of these Muslim countries. Of course, their own internal weaknesses and follies gave the opportunity to the western powers to interfere and usurp authority wherever possible.

It is, however, an unfortunate fact that the main cause of the Muslim troubles outside was the existence of the British empire in India. The entire foreign policy of the British in the East hinged upon India—the maintenance of communications between England, Australia and British India, the strategy of defence of India and of military operations against possible aggression, and the requirements of imperialist economy. In order to safeguard these economic and military interests, the countries on the route to India were obliged by diplomatic pressure or armed force to subordinate their freedom to the dictates of British policy. The countries whose coastal regions abutted on the British sea line, as well as the countries whose land frontiers were uncomfortably proximate or strategically important, received the special attention of the British policy makers.

In the task of subjugating the Muslim lands the Indian army joined the British navy, and the conjunction of the two proved irresistible.

Thus it was that many Muslim countries which had remained free till the end of the eighteenth century passed under the domination of Western powers either as protectorates or as subject people. In these imperialist adventures Britain was the most successful. Its foreign policy till the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 was favourable towards such Muslim states as the Ottoman Empire, whose integrity it wanted to maintain in order to keep Russia as far from the Eastern Mediterranean as possible.

After 1869, Egypt became more important than Turkey for the protection of the Indian route through the Red Sea. British policy consequently took a turn. In 1853 when the demise of the "Sick Man" of Europe appeared imminent, Czar Nicholas I had proposed a partition of the Ottoman Empire among the interested European governments. But Britain opposed the blatant act of brigandage. After 1869 the need having passed, British policy changed. In 1876 Gladstone started a vehement propaganda against the Sultan's rule, which had the effect of modifying the earlier pro-Turkish policy. Then the process of dismemberment of the Turkish Empire began. In 1878 Cyprus was annexed. Egypt which was a province of the Empire, but was ruled by hereditary governors, unfortunately, fell into financial confusion and the British as one of the creditors intervened. A popular uprising under Arabi Pasha was suppressed and in 1882, Britain under the government of Gladstone established its protectorate over the country through which the vital Suez Canal wended its way.

France had occupied Algeria already and now took possession of Tunisia. Sudan was conquerred by Kitchener in 1898 and placed under Anglo-Egyptian condominium. Salisbury renewed the proposal to divide the Ottoman Empire with France and Russia in 1895.

Thus the passage through the Red Sea was made safe. But in the countries to the east of the Canal developments were taking place which caused great anxiety to the British. The empire of the Czar was rapidly advancing into Central Asia. The entire region bordering the north of Persia from the Caspian to the Oxus had come under Russian control between 1864 to 1874. Ten years later Merv the centre of Turkoman territory flanking the north of Persia and the north-west of Afghanistan submitted to the Russians. Then the contacts of Russia were extending into northern Persia including Tehran. These events considerably enhanced British fears for India.

Britain countered the Russian advance by raising a defensive wall which would obstruct all forward movements from the north. This necessitated control over the policies of the countries in this extensive region—Persia, the Persian Gulf Shaikhdoms and Afghanistan.

Meanwhile a united Germany was fast growing into an even more serious rival of Britain and before the first decade of the twentieth century had ended both Britain and Russia and their mutual ally France decided to come to an accommodation regarding their spheres of influence. This was done at the expense of the Muslim states of North Africa and West Asia.

The consequent world-wide catastrophic regression cast a gloom over the minds of the Muslims. But they were not willing to accept the fate which the West seemed to design for them. There was a reaction both in India and abroad against the West. In India early in the nineteenth century the school of Shah Waliullah at Delhi took up the challenge, with the consequence that the movement for *Jihad* was launched. It was very active in the thirties and forties, then its leaders gave support to the rebellion in 1857, it continued to worry the Government till 1873—when Norman, the Chief Justice of Calcutta,and Mayo, the Viceroy, became its victims. Its sparks were not extinguished even during the First World War. One of the permanent achievements of Waliullah's movement was the foundation of schools, amongst which the *Nadwat ul Ulama* of Deoband—a consistent supporter of the national struggle for independence, is the most noteworthy.

The Deoband school was anti-British and anti-imperialist. As long ago as 1889, one of the most respected Muslim divines, M. Rashid Ahmad Gangohi had warned the Muslims in these words : "Syed Ahmad (of Aligarh) may or may not be the well-wisher of Islam, but an association with him in the long run, would be poisonous to the Muslims and Islam. He administers sweet poison that is fatal. Therefore do not join him, you may join the Hindus."[2]

Outside India Syed Jamal-al-Din Afghani founded the Pan-Islamic movement. He visited India himself and made many followers in India. The movement was anti-Western in culture, traditionist in religion and largely anti-British in politics. Jamal-al-Din endeavoured to revive the preeminent authority of the Ottoman Caliph and to establish the unity of the universal Islamic brotherhood under his leadership. Though it failed to achieve its aims, it was popular among journalists, writers and thinkers—both of the old as well as the new school of Muslims, in India, and gave an impetus to the rising consciousness of communal solidarity.

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[2] Muhammad Mian, S., *Ulama-i-Haq*, (*urdu*) Vol V.

Other factors contributed towards the consummation of this end.

Early in the nineteenth century Government took decisions on administrative matters which adversely affected the Muslims. In 1835, Government resolved to give its official support to Western education and provided an incentive for its popular acceptance by making its acquisition compulsory for better paid public services. The Muslims were dissuaded by their religious mentors from taking advantage of this education and, therefore, missed their opportunities of government services.

Then in 1837 the Government substituted English or an Indian language in place of Persian as the language of the courts. It had two results—one, as those concerned with the administration of law and justice were Persian-knowing Muslims, many of them were thrown out of employment.

Again so far as the laws were concerned the entire system of Muslim criminal law was abandoned, and with the exception of the personal laws of the Muslims and the Hindus, all civil laws including adjectival laws were codified in accordance with the principles of English jurisprudence.

Then secondly, with the introduction of English as the medium of instruction for secondary and higher education, the knowledge of classical languages—Sanskrit and Arabic, became specialized in the communities, Sanskrit for the Hindus and Arabic for the Muslims, which increased the cultural gulf between the two.

An even greater cause of difference arose as a result of the controversy between Hindi and Urdu. Outside Bengal, Urdu was the language of the polite urban society of both Hindus and Muslims in northern India. About the middle of the seventies a demand arose for the recognition of Hindi as a court language. The British officials of the times were generally hostile to the Muslims whom they regarded as the protagonists of *Jihad* and promoters of the Revolt of 1857. They vigorously took up the cause of Hindi. In order to prove the independence of Hindi many grammers were written. Hindi works like the *Ramayana* of Tulsidas were translated into English and Hindi writers were encouraged. On the other hand,Urdu was denounced as an artificial language confined to the few and Hindi was proclaimed as the real language of the people. This propaganda was the starting point in the change of the attitude of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan who was earlier a believer in Hindu-Muslim unity. But as luck would have it the use of Hindi remained limited within the province of Bihar and during Sir Syed's life time did not affect the N.W. Province (Uttar Pradesh). Though the apprehensions of the Muslims were roused, the feelings did not assume the bitterness that they did some years later.

A more profound cause which broadened the separatism between the two communities and deepened the consciousness of difference between them was the rise of the religious and social reform movements. During the pre-British times the Hindus and Muslims had assimilated many cultural traits from each other, including social customs and religious ceremonies. This mixing of cultures was largely unconscious and uncritical.

The impact of Western culture and the criticism of the European missionaries started the process of self-examination. Among the Hindus Raja Ram Mohan Roy and among the Muslims Shah Waliullah were the pioneers. They closely scrutinized the contemporary scene and came to similar conclusions regarding the purification of religion and the restoration of its pristine virtue and simplicity.

The movements developed on parallel but separate lines. The Hindu thinkers encouraged by the discoveries of European Indologists, the European founders of the Theosophical Society and Hindu reformers began to dream of the revival of the ancient Hindu civilization. The Muslim leaders denounced the non-Muslim accretions to their faith and sought to revert to the times of the Prophet and the four righteous Caliphs.

The more zealous were not satisfied with the positive task of reform and commenced polemics against one another. The preachers of the Arya Samaj denounced Islam, Christianity and other religions and the Maulavis and Padrees entered the contests and in writing, speech and public debate, vilified Hinduism. If any one of them believed that they would convince the others by their argumentation and bring about wholesale conversion, he was utterly mistaken. Their efforts brought few conversions but a vast amount of ill-will.

The consequence of the wordy warfare was the closing of ranks of each community and extending the gulf between them.

The reform movement gave a great incentive to education on modern lines. The Brahmo Samaj provided the inspiration for the Hindu College in Calcutta. The Arya Samaj established many colleges and chools and the Theosophical Society started the Benares Hindu College. Numerous Hindu institutions came into existence in various provinces of India to give expression to caste, sect or religious zeal of the founders.

Similar motives led to the establishment of the M.A.O. College at Aligarh. Sir Syed's aims were:

(1) to provide a centre of Western learning for the Muslims of the higher classes, so that they might recover the ground lost as a result of the opposition of the Ulama to Western education;

(2) to show to the British rulers that Islam was not antipathetic to the West in culture, religion and social relations;

(3) to promote loyalty towards the rulers, and solicit their favours; and

(4) to teach the Muslims that Islam was not a stereotyped static religion but a progressive and liberal religion in consonance with reason and laws of nature.

In the first three of his aims he achieved great success, with the result that the Muslims were rehabilitated in the favours of the rulers. The weight of despair and dejection was lifted and the vision of a bright future inspired them with life and courage. Immediately, as more and more young men of the upper classes came under the direct or indirect influence of Aligarh, pride in the community increased.

The implications of Sir Syed's aims were of far-reaching consequence both for the Muslims and the Indians as a whole.

The tendencies to isolate the Muslims from the main stream of Indian life, to lay stress upon particularistic Muslim interests and to deepen the communal conscioueness, were accentuated. The emphasis upon Muslim rights as distinct from the rights of the other communities was increased, either by ignoring the obligations of the Muslims towards their neighbours or by opposing their claims even when they aimed at the general good.

Sir Syed's concept of loyalty to the Government was based on his sense of the superiority of the British race and British institutions. His reverence for them bordered on "almost cringing".[3] The result was that he vehemently opposed any kind of dissent from the policies of Government and advised his co-religionists to abstain from participating in any political movement: For him politics was synonymous with criticism and disagreement, but loyalty, approval and support of Government did not amount to politics.

Another fateful consequence of his unbounded admiration for the British was that he surrendered his own judgment to the opinions of his British mentors, such as Auckland Colvin, the Lt. Governor of the N.W. Provinces, (Present Uttar Pradesh), and Theodore Beck, the first Principal of the MAO College (1883-98). Under their inspiration he abandoned his earlier attitude on the Indian problem and made the speech in the Viceroy's Council (1883) condemning representative institutions on the ground that the Muslims would suffer under them, closely following the arguments of Beck.[4]

His antagonism to the Indian National Congress in 1887 emanated from the same source. He committed himself to the British theory of Hindu-Muslim incompatibility in the field of politics and tried to convince his community that the Congress was Hindu organisation which should be avoided at all cost.

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[3] Aziz, K.K., *The Making o, Pakistan*, p. 20.

[4] Noman, M., *Muslim India*, p. 52.

It is true that many Muslims refused to follow his views, among them, the Ulama. But those who did listen to him were mainly members of the land-owning class and their scions who had received English education. They belonged mainly to the northern provinces. But as the zamindari (landlord) system did not prevail in Western India and the southern provinces, the Muslim upper class in that region did not accept Sir Syed's leadership.

It must, however, be admitted that the Muslims (higher and middle classes) all over India were coming closer and the old particularities were losing their force in the face of the new spirit of communal solidarity.

Thus, at the turn of the century both the middle class Hindus and Muslims had become conscious of their in-group integrity and their out-group diversity. Having reached the stage of community, political forces pushed them into the next stage in social evolution, namely nationality.

But as late as the eve of the First World War the heterogeneity of the Muslim community, in spite of the educated middle class unity, was as conspicuous as that of the Hindus. Montagu, the Under-Secretary of State for India (1910–14), speaking in Parliament remarked that it was a mistake to talk of the Muhammadans of India as though they were a homogeneous nationality.

An enquiry was made and a report prepared on this matter by the Government of India. It recorded :

"The Muhammadan community of India is, as a matter of fact and history, a conglomerate mass of heterogeneous races, tribes, castes and creeds differing from each other in respect of the laws of succession and inheritance, marriage and divorce, religious usages and beliefs, and manners and customs......A community or a race that is divided into tribes, descended from different stocks, indigenous, foreign; mixed or converted, and into castes and creeds historically or traditionally, and claiming conflicting interests can hardly be said to be a homogeneous nationality....All the tribes and castes widely differ from each other ethnographically, linguistically, physically, morally and mentally."[5]

The significance of the difference between 'community' and 'nationality'. is that the first term stresses the awareness of social and cultural unity, the second term makes manifest political interests and treats other interests as subsidiary.

The transformation from community to nationality was accelerated in the early years of the twentieth century. The factors which brought it about were both negative and positive. Among the first was the resurgence of Hinduism, the assertiveness and chauvinism of some sections of the Hindus.

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[5] Home Dept. 1912, Political Part B, Proceedings, September 1912, No. 85.

The Hindu resurgence was evident in religious, social, political and cultural movements; the assertiveness was made manifest in the political agitations in Bengal and Maharashtra, and the attitude of chauvinism, in such matters as cow protection, Shivaji festival, music before mosques, *Shuddhi* (conversion) and *Sangathan* (organization).

Hindu men of letters harped upon the unsavoury incidents of medieval history. The British historians presented the Muslim rulers as cruel bigoted tyrants obsessed with the unholy desire to exterminate the Hindus and their religion and culture. Many Hindu thinkers propagated the myth of Hindu spirituality and Hindu superiority, contrasting them with the despicable materialism of the West.

All this provided much grist to the mill which grinded out an abundance of pride and self-confidence among the Hindus. But its effect on the Muslims was not unexpected—creation of fear, jealousy, wounded self-respect and resentment. Much of this was quite unjustified and all was greatly exaggerated as a result of British influence.

The writings of British authors show how favouritism and patronage were heaped upon the Muslims and they were encouraged to look down upon the Hindus. The Muslims were told that "they were an imperial people who, like the British, had captured India from the Hindus", that they possessed the supreme values of activity, masculinity and forcefulness, and in contrast with the Hindus were "smart, capable and full of resource."[6] Because the Muslim was forceful, even as an enemy, he was worthy of respect. Kipling hints that the East and West could be united if "two strong men" (Briton and Muslim) meet."[7] According to Steel, "Babur should be the patron saint of Indian services."[8]

Says Greenberger, "Hindus in general, Bengalis in particular, are portrayed in a very harsh light." He enumerates the derogatory epithets which British novelists use for the Hindus, and goes on to explain why there was so much hatred of the Hindu educated middle class. The explanation is that "the Hindu outraged the western mind in the three principles fundamental to its approach to life—that of reason, that of order, and that of measure."[9]

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[6] Greenberger, A.J., *The British Image of India*, p. 46 Croker, B.M., *Diana Barrington, A Romance of Central India*, (1888).

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 46. (Kipling, B., *The Ballad of East and West*).

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 46. (Steel, F.A. *Knight Errant*).

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 47-51.

The Hindu is branded as a coward, unsportsmanlike, incapable of leadership, effeminate, fatalist. About the educated Hindu, Perrin says, "those of the Hindus who are most closely connected with Europeans are the very ones to display the greatest animosity and revolt against our rules and customs."[10]

Not only the person of the Hindu but his religion also was travestied. It was stigmatized as negative, passive, cruel, idolatrous, impervious to suggestions of change, disgusting. Philip Mason says of Hardwar, "Wickedness clings to the skirt of holiness for what is holy becomes lost in superstition....There are charlatans among the priests, there are evil-eyed fakirs, and there is every kind of impostor among the hundreds of beggars. And it is because the place is holy and blessed by nature that it is also the home of pimps and panders, smugglers of the intoxicating hemp drugs, vendors of cocaine, cattle thieves, kidnappers and gamblers."[11] Miss Mayo belonged to this tradition.

If Steel, Kipling Croker, Philip Mason, *et hoc genus omne*, represent the mind of the rulers of India, it is not difficult to surmise why Hindus and Muslims became so ill-disposed towards each other and why the British were able to exploit this ill will to prolong their rule.

The riots on the occasions when *Id*, or *Muharram* and *Dussehra* or *Holi* fell on the same days, the defiant cow-protection movement and the stubborn vindication of their rights in bringing out processions unmindful of the feelings of one another gave offence to both and widened the rift between them.

Tilak in 1893, started the Ganapati Festival and in 1895 inaugurated the Shivaji cult. By themselves, they need not have disturbed the Muslim peace of mind, but unfortunately they were accompanied with the withdrawal of the Hindus from the Muharram processions and the justification of the murder of Afzal Khan by Shivaji. This offered a golden opportunity to the Anglo-Indian journalists to malign Tilak as a Hindu communalist and to create misunderstandings between the two communities.

In 1892, the passing of the Indian Councils Act was evidently a feeble first response to the urgent demands of the Indian National Congress. The Muslim leaders took note of the success of political agitation. The Act marked the opening of a new chapter, and they were set to think of the future. A shock was in store for them. The Lt. Governor of U.P., A. Macdonell, following the example of Bihar (1881) accepted in 1900, the plea for permitting the use of Hindi in offices and courts. This infuriated the protagonists of Urdu, and Muhsinul Mulk, the

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[10] *Ibid.*, p. 67 (Perrin, A., *Idolatry*).

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 134 (Philip Mason, *Call the Next Witness*).

Secretary of the MAO College Trust, called a meeting at Lucknow to protest against the order. Macdonell demanded that he should either resign from the Secretaryship of the College or withdraw from the agitation in favour of Urdu.

To save the College from the wrath of the provincial government Muhsinul Mulk withdrew. But it became clear that the old policy of Sir Syed—non-involvement in politics, was no longer valid. Viqarul Mulk with some other prominent Muslims mooted the proposal for establishing a political organisation of the Muslims. An association was formed with these objects—(1) to represent the Muslim point of view to Government, (2) to propagate the necessity of continuing the British rule, and (3) to prevent Muslims from cooperating with the Congress in its demand for representative institutions and simultaneous examination for the Indian Civil Service in England and India.

Muslim Deputation

But though the organisation proved still born the propaganda against the Congress obtained much success. So far the Muslims had not given much heed to Sir Syed's counsel to avoid the Congress, for in most of the ears between 1886 to 1893, the number of their delegates was higher than their percentage in the population. But the year 1893 was critical in communal relations and in subsequent years the numbers began to fall, especially after the Ahmedabad session of 1902, when vigorous efforts were made to dissuade the Muslims from joining. An attempt by Aga Khan to bring about an understanding with the Congress failed.

The idea of organisation was now taken up more earnestly. When the Partition of Bengal (16 October 1905) created fearful turmoil in the country, the communities were divided into antagonistic groups—one opposing the Partition and the other supporting it. Unfortunately the first group which knew that the real mischief-maker was the British Government behaved with such lack of restraint and consideration as to turn the Muslims generally against them. The Muslims, on the other hand, acted short-sightedly and for the sake of immediate petty gains began to behave as if the Hindus were their enemies.

The consequences of the Partition were : (1) that the Muslim community realized that it was a majority in a defined region, which provided a territorial base for an incipient nationalism. This helped in the evolution of the sense of Muslim nationality; and (2) the Hindu and Muslim separation was accentuated. The Muslim population was thoroughly aroused and a new factor had been introduced into history which was bound to affect the future not only of the province but of the whole of India.[12]

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[12] Minto to Hare, November 11, 1906, in Das, M.N., *India under Morley* and *Minto*, p. 45.

The Muslims were elated by their new status. But soon the canker of anxiety began to irritate. For in the British general election of 1905 the Conservatives lost their majority in Parliament and the Liberal Party came into power. Morley became the Secretary of State for India. The Indian Muslims did not regard the British Liberals as friends of Islam, for Gladstone, the high priest of liberalism, had changed the attitude of England from support to opposition of Ottoman Empire. They were worried about Morley's intentions, for early in 1906 it had become known that the Secretary of State was contemplating reforms in the Government of India. When on July 20, a formal announcement to that effect was made in Parliament, things began to hum.

In India, on August 3, 1906, Minto with the prodding of Morley had got rid of Bampfylde Fuller, the champion of the Muslim cause. This produced utter dismay and the Muslim confidence in British friendship was shaken. Prominent Muslims all over India became agitated and nervous. The British officials in India and in London were compelled to think of measures to avert the deterioration of the situation and to devise means of preventing the Muslims from going over to the Congress.

Minto conveyed his anxieties to Morley, and while suggesting the need of recognizing the importance of the Congress, stressed equally the desirability of a counterpoise against the Congress. He wrote :

"I have always had great hopes of the Mohammedan population... Now that they are becoming somewhat alarmed at what they consider Bengali successes, the justice of our safeguarding their interests will become all the more apparent, and ought to be of real assistance to us in dealing with much of the one-sided agitation we have to face."[13]

Morley agreed but apprehended "that before long the Mohammedans will throw in their lot with the Congressmen against you."[14]

The pot was on the boil. The Secretary of State and the Viceroy had cooked up the broth which would satisfy the hunger of the Muslims. The policy was settled, it was necessary to find a suitable occasion to proclaim the assurance of continued favour to the Muslim community.

Meanwhile the Muslim leaders were consulting their friends—both Muslim and British. Bilgrami of the Nizam's service was pouring into the ears of Bayley, the Resident at Hyderabad, the apprehensions of the Muslims from a Secretary of State who "knows more about Voltaire and eighteenth century literature than the condition of contemporary India."[15]

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[13] Minto to Morley, August 15, 1906 cited in Mary Minto, *India, Minto and Morley*, pp. 28-29.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

[15] *Minto Papers*, Letters and Telegrams, 1906, Vol. 2, No. 23, cited in Tripathy, A., *The Extremist Challenge* p. 154.

Muhsinul Mulk agreed with Bilgrami. In a letter which he wrote to Archbold he observed, "Mr. Morley is a philosopher and might well have been contented to give lessons in philosophy, and one cannot but feel sorry that the destiny of India has been placed in his hands."[16]

Other leading Muslims pressed upon Muhsinul Mulk to take immediate steps lest their case might go by default. Among them some hailed from the N.W. Provinces (Uttar Pradesh), some from Bengal—especially Eastern Bengal, and some from the State of Hyderabad.

Among Englishmen he consulted J.B. La Touche, the Lt. Governor of N.W. Provinces. The chief intermediary between him and the Government was W.A.J. Archbold, the Principal of the MAO College, who was spending his summer vacation then at Simla. On August 4, 1906, Muhsinul Mulk wrote a letter to Archbold which drew his attention to Morley's speech warning him that the announcement would produce a greater tendency among young educated Muslims, for they were already somewhat disappointed and inclined to join the Congress. He pointed to the dissatisfaction of the Muslims with their representation in the Council and expressed their fear that by the extension of the principle of election "no Mohammedan will get into the Councils."[17]

The letter sought Archbold's advice concerning a proposal "to submit a memorial from the Mohammedans to the Viceroy, and to request His Excellency's permission for a deputation to wait on him."[18]

Archbold immediately wrote to Dunlop Smith, "when I read of the meeting and uneasiness in Dacca (on the resignation of Fuller on August 3, 1906), and saw the names of those concerned I was very anxious to suggest the deputation as a solvent of the differences there, as well as possibly elsewhere" (meaning Aligarh). He advised the Private Secretary, "If the Mohammedans were informed (privately) that a deputation would be received and a statement made, they would present a petition to the Viceroy at Simla."[19]

Archbold who looked upon himself as the champion of the Muslim cause, now guided them in the Simla affair.

Dunlop Smith, the Private Secretary of the Viceroy, needed no inducement to secure the permission, as he was a convinced upholder of the policy of winning over the Muslims against the Congress.

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[16] Letter from Muhsinul Mulk to Archbold, Bombay, August 18, 1906, cited in Wasti, S.R., *Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement*, p. 232.

[17] *Morley Papers:* Enclosure from Minto to Morley, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 62.

[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 62-3.

[19] *Ibid.*, Appendix V, p. 228.

Minto greatly valued the advice of Dunlop Smith which usually coincided with his own inclinations. He, therefore, without any delay accepted the request of Muhsinul Mulk.

On August 8, Minto forwarded the August 4 letter of Muhsinul Mulk to Morley. On August 10, Dunlop Smith told Archbold, "H.E. will agree to receive the Deputation."[20] In the meantime he consulted some Government officials. D. Ibbetson, the Lt. Governor of the Panjab, who expressing his approval for the proposal to receive a Muslim deputation, said, "it could be a calamity if they were to drive them into the arms of the Congress party."[21]

Lancelot Hare, the successor of Fuller, and "cool-headed, strong and just man" of Minto advised the Viceroy not only to receive the deputation, but treat it as the real representative of the Muslims of India. According to him, "the Mohammedans will follow their leaders without question and to a man almost as a matter of fact, all political agitation must be engineered."[22] Minto fortified with these opinions communicated his decision to Morley on the 10th September that he would receive the deputation on October 1st. Three days later on September 13, the leader of the Deputation was told that the Viceroy would meet the deputation on the 1st of October. Morley in his reply on September 26, said that he would be looking forward keenly to the Viceroy's talk with the Muslims.

Meanwhile the promoters of the Deputation were busy with making necessary arrangements. In the letter dated August 4, 1906, Muhsinul Mulk had sought the advice of Archbold concerning the propriety of a Muslim Deputation to the Viceroy.

Archbold in his strictly confidential reply dated August 10, 1906, informed Muhsinul Mulk that he had consulted Col. Dunlop Smith and assured him, that the Muslims had no wish whatever to do anything that would cause difficulty to the Government, but explained the reasonable fears which they entertained.

Then he went on to suggest the steps which should be taken, *viz.*, (1) that a formal petition should be immediately sent bearing the signatures of a few representative Muslims; (2) that a number of prominent Muslims should be chosen to form the Deputation and sign the memorandum; and (3) as to what the address should contain, his advice was that it should contain :

"A general profession of loyalty and a statement that the history of the Mohammedans in the past justifies confidence in their conduct in the future;

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[20] Das, M.N., *op. cit.*, p. 166. Minto Correspondence.

[21] Gilbert, M., *Servant of India*, p. 51.

[22] Minto to Morley, September 10, 1906, enclosing Hare's letter to Dunlop Smith, cited in Das, M.N., *op. cit.*, p. 170.

"An expression of gratitude that important steps in the direction of self-government are contemplated...

"A statement of the fear lest by the adoption of any general system of elections the interests of the Mohammedans, who are numerically in a minority in many districts should suffer.

"The expression of the hope that by the adoption of some system of nomination, or of the representation of interests as determined by religious belief, the proper weight should be given to the opinions of Mohammedans.

"The expression of the view that in a country situated as is India, how it is important that the opinions of landowners, who are connected with by far the greatest industry in the country, should have full weight and expression, and so forth."

The letter proceeded to say, "in this whole transaction, I want to keep in the background. But you know how thoroughly I have the interests of the Mohammedans at heart, and I shall be delighted in every way in my power to help. I may be of service in preparing a draft of the address, or in criticising it. ....You will, at all events, let me see the address before it is settled, as I know something of the art of wording requests, so that they may please as well as ask."[23]

On August 14 Archbold sent a draft of the formal application to Muhsinul Mulk who sent it to his friends for suggestions. Muhsinul Mulk in his reply of August 18 pointed out the desirability of making a few alterations, and asked Archbold whether "it is right for the government to allow an important section of the Indian population which has always supported and even depended on Government to safeguard its interests to be disappointed and get up a spirit of agitation like the Hindus ?"[24]

Archbold showed this letter to Dunlop Smith who sent its copy to Lancelot Hare. He communicated with S.H. Bilgrami of Hyderabad and S. Nawab Ali Chowdhry of Dacca, concerning the address and the composition of the delegation. He drew up also the "Formal Request" for the Mohammedans and sent it to them for signatures.[25]

The Muslims formed a committee which collected numerous signatures for the Request. They prepared an address whose contents had been discussed between Muhsinul Mulk, S.H. Bilgrami, and Archbold.[26] The text of the address was finalised by 16th September and an advance copy was despatched to the Viceroy soon after . He was already acquainted with the general trend of the contents and had written to Morley on 18th September about the line he would take in his reply. Morley had given him the signal to go ahead.

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[23] The letter of W.A.J. Archbold to Muhsinul Mulk, dated, Simla, the 10th of August. Copy supplied to the author through the favour of Professors Syed Nuru Hasan and K.A. Nizami from the Archives of the Aligarh Muslim University.

[24] Wasti, S.R., *op. cit.*, Appendix J., Letter No. 4, pp. 231-33.

[25] Ram Gopal, *Indian Muslims*, p. 97.

[26] Muhsinul Mulk's letter to Archbold, August 18, 1906, refers to Archbold's draft and his own reaction. (Das, M.N., *op. cit.*, pp. 167-68).

The members to be included in the delegation were chosen, and the Aga Khan, head of the Ismaili sect of the Muslims, was requested to lead it. The choice of the Aga Khan for the leadership is intriguing. His grandfather who was the governor of the province of Mahallats and Qum in Iran under the Qajar rulers, was involved in dynastic quarrels and obliged to migrate to Sind. He helped the British in the first Afghan War and in the campaign against the Amirs of Sind. The traditions of fidelity to the British were followed by the grandson and brought rich rewards.

The address was signed by "Nababs, Jagirdars, Taluqdars, Lawyers, Zamindars, Merchants and others"—thirty-five in number, who claimed to represent "a large body of the Mohammedan subjects of His Majesty the King Emperor in different parts of India."

The claim is significant, because it is the first occasion on which the Indian Muslims acted as a distinct community. The address was presented to Minto on October 1st at the Viceregal Lodge in Simla. It contained a number of demands :

(1) Adequate representation in all services—civil and military and in the High Courts; the appointment to higher posts without competitive examinations.

(2) Guarantee of a number of seats in the councils of the Municipal and District Boards and the syndicates and senates of the universities.

(3) Election of Muslims to the Provincial Councils through separate Muslim electorates, and in numbers not in proportion to their population, but in accordance with their political importance.

(4) Election of Muslims to the Imperial Legislative Council through a separate electorate, in sufficient number so that the Muslims may not be an ineffective minority.

(5) Aid in founding a Muslim University which would be a centre of Muslim religious and intellectual life.

In his reply Minto addressed the delegates as "the descendants of a conquering and ruling race", and "welcomed the representative character, of the deputation, as expressing the views and aspirations of the enlightened Muslim community of India."

He praised the mature understanding on which its proposals were based. He reminded them that the British rulers of India had been helping the Muslims in the spread of education in order to enable them to enter government service since the times of Warren Hastings. He lauded the services of Sir Syed and the Aligarh College for the brilliant record in giving training to the Muslims in loyalty, common sense and sound reasoning.

Concerning the demand included in the address he gave a general assurance in diplomatic terms. He completely agreed with the opinion of the delegation regarding the defects of the representative system in these words :

"I am as firmly convinced as I believe you to be that any electoral representation in India would be doomed to mischievous failure which aimed at granting a personal enfranchisement regardless of the beliefs and traditions of the communities composing the population of the continent."

Thus the principle of special electorates for communities was officially accepted. Further the assurance was given that the political rights and interests of the Muslims as a community would be safeguarded in any reorganisation of the administration.

The Simla episode had far-reaching consequences which surprisingly did not then attract close attention of the political parties. The Congress leaders were divided. The extremists were furiously engaged in the anti-partition agitation and cared little for the palaver between the upper class Muslims and the Viceroy. The moderates were more anxious about the measure of reforms and the extent of advance towards representative government than the distribution of seats in the Councils.

The Congress in December 1906 took no notice, and although Dadabhai Naoroji made a passionate appeal for the unity of the two communities he did not say a word about the Simla performance. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, as he later publicly stated, approved; Romesh Chandra Dutt had no fault to find with Minto's speech. Nor was the nationalist press much perturbed. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, however, commented acidly and made a fun of the proceedings. The *Tribune* of Lahore dismissed it as another exercise in the vilification of the Hindus.

Minto was supremely happy. He had pulled back 62 million Muslims from joining the ranks of the seditious opposition. Morley gave him an eloquent testimonial for his adroitness. The British press led by the *Times*, and the Anglo-Indian press as a whole showered encomiums on the pronouncement of the Viceroy.

The Muslims were overwhelmed with joy at their success. Muhsinul Mulk told Dunlop Smith how pleased and satisfied the Muslims were at the clear and sympathetic recognition of the rights of the Mohammedans and how the historic declaration of the policy of the Indian Government had put a new heart into them.[27]

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[27] Wasti, S.R., *op. cit.*, p. 75.

A delegate who met Lady Minto at the afternoon reception assured her, "His Excellency has kindled love in our hearts. We have always been loyal, but now we feel that the Viceroy is our friend."[28] The Muslim Prime Minister of Patiala declared, "a hundred years ago Lord Minto came and saved our state : We never forgot the gratitude we owe to his family. Now God has sent his descendant not only to help Patiala, but to save India, and our hearts are full of thankfulness."[29]

In the address presented to Lord Minto on his visit to the MAO College, Aligarh, on April 22, 1908, the Muslim leaders stated : "At a time when the fortunes of our community were at their lowest ebb, when the prospects in the struggle for existence going on around us were of the gloomiest, Your Excellency's statesmanlike and generous policy towards them raised us from the depths of despondency and filled us with a new life, new hope, new courage, which bid fair to usher in the dawn of a bright future for the Musalmans of India. In their affection and regard, Your Excellency therefore occupies a unique position."[30]

The etiology of the Simla delegation is hardly of any importance. The delegation as stated in the address consisted of a section of the Muslim community, namely; the upper class. This class under the guidance of Sir Syed had chosen for itself a distinct policy—loyalty to the rulers, in the expectation of rehabilitation of their fortunes ruined by the Revolt of 1857. According to Sir Syed, the British rule in India was permanent and irremovable, and therefore, the community could only flourish if it could win the favours of the British Government. It logically followed that the Muslims should place all their interests in the hands of the rulers and oppose all those who expressed even the mildest criticism of and the slightest dissent from Government's policies or indulged in public agitation.

It is not suprising, therefore, that in the situation created by Morley's announcement Muhsinul Mulk should have sought the advice of his British friends, especially in view of the fact that he had received a humiliating rebuff not long before. It hardly matters to enquire, therefore, whether the idea of the delegation emanated from him or from the officials, or who suggested the terms of the address. Nor is it worthwhile to establish whether the two main claims of the Deputationists—separate electorates and weightage, emanated from the Muslim leaders or were put into their mind by the officials. For the fact is that the Deputation owned them both and put them forward as necessary for the protection of Muslim interests.

In this connection the evidence of Ramsay MacDonald is relevant.

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[28] Mary, Countess of Minto, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

[29] *Ibid.*,

[30] *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, April 22, 1908.

He wrote:

"The Mohamedan leaders are inspired by certain Anglo-Indian officials, and these officials have pulled wires at Simla and in London and of malice afore-thought sowed discord between Hindu and Mohamedan communities."[31]

Minto was seized of the Muslim problem through his talks with Muslim leaders like the Aga Khan, through the advice of top officials like Fuller, Hare, Ibbetson and through discussions with members of his Executive Council. He was anxious to find an opportunity to conciliate the community and to rally the younger generation which was wavering. Dunlop-Smith, his conscience keeper and Archbold a friend of Dunlop Smith, were both thinking on the same lines and were in close touch with the Muslim leaders.

Simla Delegation Analysed

There can be little doubt, that the delegation and the address were the product of a joint enterprise of the leaders of the upper class Muslims and the British bureaucrats.

The remarkable features of the affair were, (1) the unreserved acceptance of the delegation as the sole representative of the entire Muslim community, and (2) the complete approval of the demand for the recognition of the Muslims as a nation, 'a nation within a nation' according to the Aga Khan, and therefore deserving of special treatment.

For the sake of understanding the developments which took place later, it is necessary to analyze the claims put forward in the address and the reasons on which they were based.

In the first place the claim that the delegates represented all the Muslims of India is obviously absurd, for the delegates described themselves as representatives of a large body of the Muhammadans. But Minto welcomed them as representatives expressing the views of the enlightened Muslim community of India and looked upon the address as emanating from a representative body. Minto's exuberance granted them a status which contradicted the facts.

As has been pointed out in another chapter, the Muslims were not a homogeneous body. The masses followed their divines—Mullahs, Maulavis and Ulama. The divines radically differed from the westernized upper class Muslims in their political aims and methods. The mercantile classes of western India and the south generally disagreed with the policies of Sir Syed.

Many eminent Muslims who supported the Congress were excluded. Some rising talented Muslims (who afterwards changed their loyalties) were in 1906 ardent nationalists, e.g. M.A. Jinnah, who attended the Calcutta Congress (1906) and acted as the Secretary of Dadabhai Naoroji, the President, and Mohammed Iqbal who composed his famous national song "*Sare Jahan se achcha Hindustan hamara.*"

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[31] MacDonald, R., *The Awakening of India,* p. 176.

The fact is that the Aligarh School of politics which backed the deputation to Simla and which was strongly opposed to the Indian National Congress had achieved only limited success so far, and with the help of the Government the leaders were anxious to curb the tendency among the younger Muslims to join the national organisation.

The delegation was, thus, mainly representative of the landed aristocracy of the community in northern India. Of the 35 delegates, eleven belonged to the N.W. Province, eight to the Panjab and eight to Bengal (Bihar included), Bombay provided four, three other provinces one each and the Nizam's State one. Excepting Ebrahimbhoy Adamji Peerbhoy there was no other delegate from the large and prosperous commercial class.

Again the delegates were not chosen by any public organisation or Association of Muslims. They were members of the delegation only in their personal capacity. A group of equally eminent persons could be hand-picked to make different demands.

Shibli's assessment of the Simla affair brings out the artificial character of the deputation and its claims. He wrote :

"The object of the Simla Deputation was, and it was frankly expressed, to get a share for the Muslims in the political rights obtained by the Hindus....Day and night its constant refrain was that the Muslims were oppressed by the Hindus and so they must be given safeguards. We do not understand the importance of the Simla deputation. It was the biggest show staged on the communal platform."

Shibli refused to dignify the Simla transaction as a piece of politics, for, according to him, "politics arouses nation into action and inspires men for suffering and the highest sacrifice." He asked, "But have our politics evoked these qualities in a single individual?"[32]

Why then did Minto treat the thirty-five as the representatives of the enlightened Muslim community disregarding all the rest ? The answer can only be, because by showering the Viceregal favours on them he wanted the other Muslims to realize that only those who gave loyal support to the government and abstained from joining the Indian National Congress deserved government patronage. On these considerations Minto proclaimed them as representatives of the whole enlightened Muslim community, and gave to them a charter which the Muslim League fully exploited afterwards.

The address shows that at this time the Muslims were not yet sure whether they ought to be regarded as a community or a nationality, a minority or an equality. Their demands were couched in terms which expressed hesitation on this matter. For example, they spoke of their national interest and also their repugnance to the position of an ineffectiv minority in the Imperial Legislative Council. In the same breath they confessed that in many important matters their interests were identica with those of the Hindu community.

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[32] Shibli Numani—*Muslim Gazette of Lucknow*, October 9, 1907.

The gravamen of the Muslim demand for 'adequate, real and genuine Mahommadan representation' through separate Muslim electorates, was due to the fear that in mixed electorates the Muslims who were in a minority in India and most Indian provinces would be swamped by the Hindu majorities. This would spell the ruin of the community and its cherished culture, beliefs and institutions.

Now there is no doubt that majorities tend to ignore the interests of minorities and to tyrannize over them. History tells us that the minorities have in all countries suffered, but struggled against the majorities and often won their just and reasonable rights. Therefore, the fears and apprehensions of the minorities, however exaggerated, cannot be dismissed as unsubstantial. They ought to be seriously attended to and provided against. But in the case of India of 1906, such a situation was wholly imaginary. The British had no intention to part with even an iota of power, and the reform of the Councils which they were contemplating amounted to an addition to the number of members and an extension of the opportunity of discussion and debate, without giving any right to veto or even alter or modify Government measures.

The grievance of the Muslims about their representation in the local self-governing bodies was exaggerated. If in some provinces like Bengal their numbers were less than required by their position in population, in the N.W. Province (Uttar Pradesh) it was not so. John Hewett, the Lt.-Governor, pointed out in his communication to the Government, there was no case for a change in the system of representation.

In the years 1900-01 and 1901-02, the representation of the communities in the Municipal Boards of the Uttar Pradesh (then NWP) was as follows :

	1900–01	1901–02
Total number of representatives . . .	1392	1399
Hindus	741	743
Muslims	381*	384**
Others	270	272

*27.7 per cent.
**27.4 per cent.

In 1909, the Mahomedans formed 14 per cent of the population as against 84 per cent Hindus, yet "Mahomedan electors formed 23 p.c. of the total number of electors for district boards....In as many as 29 districts out of 45, the proportion of Mahomedan members was greater than the proportion of Mahomedans to the total population."[33] The total number of members of the district boards was 663, of whom 445 were Hindus and 189 Mahomedans or 28.5 per cent (exclusive of official members). in municipal boards there were 562 Hindus and 310 Mahomedans or 32.1 per cent. Hewett's conclusion was : so while holding that "Mahomedans were entitled to more than a proportional representation, it could not be said that the present system affected them unfavourably."[34]

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[33] Bishan Narain Dar, Presidential Address, 26th Congress, Calcutta, 1911, *The Indian National Congress* (Madras, G.A. Natesan & Co., 2nd edition), p. 1042.

In the middle of 1911 there were 116 Hindu and 67 Mahomedan elected members, 10 Hindu and 2 Mahomedan nominated members; and in municipal boards 207 Hindu and 89 Mahomedan elected members, and 36 Hindu and 36 Mahomedan nominated members.[35]

The case of Bengal was peculiar. The percentage of Muslim population was larger, more than 54 per cent, but they were in a minority among the electorate.

It was not, therefore, true to say that the Muslims were discriminated against all over India in the matter of local governments. So far as the legislative councils were concerned they were constituted on the basis of the Councils Act of 1892. In the Act the provision relating to the provinces was that some of the non-official members were nominated by Government, while others were recommended by local bodies or corporations—religious communities, municipalities, universities, chambers of commerce, etc. But a majority of the members of the Council were officials. In a system of election based on communal and racial considerations with an extremely limited franchise the question of display of communal prejudices could hardly arise.

So far as the matter of government services was concerned, it is extraordinary that the Muslim leaders should have accused the Hindus for their poor representation. For, every aspect of the policy governing the services—recruitment, grading, number, qualifications, etc., was exclusively under the control of Government, whose authority and discretion could not be influenced or questioned by any community in India. Before the Revolt of 1857, the lion's share of the services was enjoyed by the Muslims. Afterwards for well known reasons they lost their privileged position. In neither case were the Hindus responsible.

It may, however, be pointed out that in the military department even after 1857, the share of the Musalmans was greater than that of the Hindus and the deputation at Simla claimed on this ground special consideration.

The Muslim complaint about underrepresentation regarding services was valid so far as services in the civil departments, especially in the Presidency of Bengal, were concerned. But in the army they were employed in much larger proportion than their total population justified Lord Curzon's enquiry in 1900 elicited the following figures :

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[34] *Ibid.*

[35] *Ibid.*

	Hindus	Muslims
Native Army	90,500	48,500
Imperial Service Troops	11,500	5,000
Military levies and military police	14,500	9,500
Total	116,500	63,500

In Eastern Bengal and Assam both Fuller and Hare did their best to reduce the disparity, partly as a measure of justice for a long neglected community, and partly for "playing off the two sections of the population against each other," as Hare reported.[36]

It is interesting to note that the Muslim leaders referred only to services, memberships of Councils and university education, the main interests, of the upper classes. They made no mention of the vicious land revenue policies, the discrimination against Indian industries, the neglect of the education of masses and so forth. They seemed to be wholly unaware of the miserable plight of the vast number of the Muslim peasants, workers and artisans.

The provisions of separate electcrates for the minorities as a piece of democratic machinery does create complications, but in complex social conditions it cannot be condemned outright and may not be avoided. Unfortunately it can lead to consequences which may destroy the solidarity and vigour of a state. As the existence of a state depends upon a fundamental agreement among the main constituents of the society, any measure which weakens the will to agree is harmful. But separate Hindu and Muslim electorates deprived the communities from owing mutual obligations, and minimised the opportunities of agreement.

Because the introduction of the system was motivated by evil intentions and was maintained in order to effectuate imperialist designs, it was bound to produce evil results. Its maleficence proved incurable, because the attempts of the two communities chiefly concerned to come to a settlement were thwarted by the existence of a third party—an alien factor, in the body politic.

But by far the worst feature of the Muslim demand was that it rested upon a misunderstanding of the basic principles of democratic government. There is no doubt that in all democratic countries the existence of political parties is essential. The functions of the parties are to organise groups in accordance with their common needs and interests, or to frame programmes and policies, to carry on propaganda, to select candidates for the legislatures and fight elections with a view to gaining power. The political parties by their very nature aim at the advancement of the temporal interests of the groups—economic welfare, measures of internal development and policies securing economic benefits and to promote national interests in foreign countries. The parties also endeavour to remove the grievances of the group they represent, in the matter of government patronage, aid, etc. In no modern country is there any political party, or for the matter of that a state, which conducts its affairs in accordance with its religious scriptures. It may, however, concern itself with social, judicial and legal matters if they impinge upon the peace, order, and progress of society, or if they conflict with the liberty of the other religious groups, or sects with different beliefs, customs and rites.

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[36] Das, M.N., *op. cit.*, p. 151. Minto to Morley, December 19, 1906.

States with subjects belonging to different religions or sects cannot survive with party alignments based on religious differences tending to disrupt the social or political order. Safety, therefore, lies in separating politics from religion—the one concerned with temporal, the other with spiritual affairs.

This being so, a religious political party is a contradiction in terms. Religious communities, regional or universal, may be bound by religious ties, but they cannot at the same time function as political parties or units in a free democratic state. This is the conclusion of history and the teaching of political science. The developments in the political life of India and Pakistan since independence are a proof of its validity.

The confusion in the mind of the communal leaders was due to their failure to recognise the difference between religious community and nationality. Both are sentiments or states of consciousness. Transcendant beliefs, tenets and practices are the cementing factor of the one; mundane interests of a group attached to a definite geographical territory the binding force of the other. The new spirit which grew in India in the latter half of the nineteenth century was the product of the new consciousness of nationality.

The transformation of communities into nationality was then proceeding apace. Outer circumstances and inner urges, however, were directing the stream of consciousness into two parallel channels. But the awakening of the sense of nationality in the communities did not necessarily prohibit their joining together to form a single political unit.

Why this did not eventuate will be discussed in subsequent chapters. But it may be noted here that similar situations arose in Europe in the seventies, but the results were different. In Germany which had recently accomplished unification, the Roman Catholics posed the danger of an alliance of all Catholic powers, both within and without, against the Empire. Bismarck regarded the organisation of a political party by a Christian denomination as utterly disruptive and let loose against the Catholics a campaign which is known as *Kulturkampf* (cultural struggle).

In France after the fall of Napoleon III a republican government was established which came into conflct with the Roman Catholic

Church, especially on the question of education. Jules Ferry, the French Prime Minister, was determined to terminate the interference of the Church in the affairs of the state and adopted measures of laicism or anti-clericalism Later, the attempt of the Catholics to organise a party failed.

In Italy the feud between the new monarchy and the Papal court ended with the extinction of the secular authority of the Pope in Rome.

In England the Education Act of 1870 and subsequent developments were a challenge to the monopoly of denominationalism.

Thus while European governments were advancing with decisive measures on the course of secularism and loosening the hold of religion, in India a contrary process was being speeded up with the encouragement and under the patronage of Government to bind politics in the coils of religion.

Strangely enough the objective in both cases was the same, viz., the enhancement and expansion of the power and authority of the state. In Europe the Church was the rival of the state and was discountenanced, while in India religion was treated as the ally of imperialism and encouraged.

Muslim League

Minto succeeded in the policy of detaching an important section of the Muslim community from the danger of joining the Congress and strengthening the cause of national unity. For, immediately after the interview with the Viceroy the deputationists met in order to consider their separate line of action. As the Aga Khan notes in his memoirs, their "only hope lay along the lines of independent political recognition and action, and that we must secure independent political recognition from the British Government as a nation within a nation."[37]

Consequently, on the occasion of the meeting of the Muhammedan Educational Conference in December 1906, Nawab Salimullah invited the Muslim leaders to Dacca. They met under the chairmanship of Viqarul Mulk who justified the organisation of the Muslims in a separate body in an Urdu speech :

"Unless united in support of one another and working in loyal unison with the Government of India the Muslim majority (?) who through misfortunes and errors, had fallen from their once high estate, were in danger of being submerged by the enormous Hindu flood."[38]

Salimullah proposed the resolution for the formation of the new body, and Hakim Ajmal Khan seconded it. It was, the-All-India Muslim League, and its objects were defined as under:

(1) promotion of feelings of loyalty to the British Government;

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[37] The Aga Khan, *Memoirs* (London, 1954), p. 70.

[38] Wasti, S.R., *op. cit.*, p. 78.

(2) protection and advancement of the political rights and interests of the Muslims of India; and

(3) prevention of the rise of hostility towards other communities.

The foundation of the League evoked different reactions in different quarters. The Anglo-Indian Press was on the whole sympathetic to a body which was "founded on the safe and sure rock of loyalty to the British Raj."[39] The *Englishman* hoped it "will provide an effective answer to the Congress."[40]

The *Times* (London) regarded it as a counterweight against the Congress, but doubted whether the League would make for peace. The Indian nationalist press made the mistake of treating this development in Muslim politics light-heartedly and considering it just one other trick of imperial diplomacy. The League was dismissed as a ricketty structure put up by ex-officials, pensioners and seekers of Government favours, destined to a speedy dissolution.

Apart from showing lack of insight and understanding of political realities, the approach was bound to hurt the feelings of an influential group among the Muslims, who enjoyed the backing of the Government. The detraction of the League threw the upper class Muslims, whom it represented, more closely into the arms of the enemies of the nationalist movement, and hence frustrated the very objective which they cherished.

The Hindu nationalist circles were not alone in underestimating the potentiality of the League and the value of the support which it received from the Government. The freedom loving anti-British Muslim Ulama also suffered from the same miscalculation. Shibli Naumani, one of the most learned scholars of the times, the founder of the institute and academy at Azamgarh and who at an earlier stage was a colleague of Sir Syed at Aligarh, was misled by the protestations of unconditional and unswerving loyalty of its leaders to question the bonafides of the League and to deprecate its aims. He wrote :

"Muslim League! What is this extraordinary creature ? Is it politics, God forbid me, is it anti-Congress ? No. Is it a House of Lords ? Yes, its disguise is of a somewhat similar kind......It is necessary to understand that not only today but even after a thousand years, the Muslim League cannot become a political body."[41]

Shibli in sarcastic verse described the League :

آزادی خیال پہ تم کو ہے غرور
تو لیگ کو بھی شان غلامی پہ ناز ہے

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[39] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

[40] *Ibid.*

[41] *Hayati-i-Shibli* (Life of Shibli Naumani) in Urdu, pp. 617-18.

مختصر اس کے فضائل کوئی پوچھے تو یہ ھیں
محسن قوم بھی ھے خادم حکام بھی ھے

This is not to say that they were not justified in the conditions then prevailing to underrate the status and influence of the League, which rested largely on British encouragement and support.

Although the birth of the Muslim League marked a further step in the growth of the sentiment of nationality, it added to the confusion in the minds of the Congress nationalists, and Hindu and Muslim communalists. The claim of nationality, which is a political concept could be justified on the part of the Muslim inhabitants of the Muslim-dominated regions of India in the east and the west, but it was meaningless in the case of Muslims, scattered over the rest of the Indian sub-continent. In these parts they could only live as a minority community as, for instance, the Roman Catholics who owe allegiance to Rome in religious matters, but remain faithful nationals of their particular states in which the Protestants are in a majority. No doubt in the emergence of this consciousness the British played an important role.

Unfortunately the inexperience and immaturity of the Indian politicians prevented them from making the distinction which, with the advantage of hindsight, it is possible to perceive today. This confusion was mainly responsible for the failure of the genuine efforts which both the Congress and the League made to arrive at a solution of the Hindu-Muslim question and to conserve the unity of the country as a whole—efforts which continued till almost the day the partition of the country was actually carried out. These efforts strongly support the view that the division of the country was neither inevitable nor beyond the realm of practical politics, for neither party seemed almost till the end enthusiastic about the prospect of the break-up of India into two states. If they accepted the division, it was because they felt helplessly driven by some unkind fate towards a consummation pregnant with unpredictable consequences.

The strangest and the most incomprehensible feature of the Muslim attitude towards the Hindu majority was, on the one hand, the belief in Muslim superiority in matters religious, in martial virtues, in social solidarity based upon the principle of equality, in the absence of casteism, and in their glorious history of conquest and empire. But on the other hand, the Muslims lamented their inferiority to the Hindus in education and intellectual pursuits, in wealth, in business, industry and trade, in independent professions, in public spirit and political organisation.

Their pride however failed to compensate for their humilitation. Fear, apprehension and jealousy continued to grow, especially because the British rulers continued to provide increasing provender for it, till at last the Muslims as a whole fell into the grip of an irremediable obsession which was impervious to reason, scared of analysis, and afraid of examining its validity.

The Hindu communalists made their retort courteous, acknowledged that they were afraid of the Muslims. For them as for the Muslims, the world had stood still since the eleventh century, when the squadrons of Turkish horsemen led by Mahmud of Ghazni trampled northern India under their hoofs, when his free lances burnt down cities, plundered palaces and temples, enslaoved thousands of men, women and children, impose their alien rule on India.

What had happened nine centuries ago could be repeated. The Pan-Islamic hordes departing from somewhere—Asia Minor, Central Asia and Afghanistan, could sweep across the Panjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal, make common cause with the Indian Muslims and reduce to subjection the unresisting Hindus.

Apparently the masochistic sadistic imagination of Hindu-Muslim stalwarts drew satisfaction from raising ghoulish horrors for inflicting torture on themselves and others.

After Morley-Minto Act

Immediately after its formation the League was faced with the problem of implementation of the promises of Minto regarding Muslim representation. For it found both Morley and Minto endeavouring to wriggle out of their commitment. Morley had prepared the scheme of mixed electoral colleges which contradicted the principle of separate representation. Minto, too, belatedly realized how wide the sweep of the principle was. He wrote to Morley : "If interpreted literally that would involve separate Muslim electorates within the various electorates proposed, such as presidency, corporation, district boards and municipalities, universities, landholders and the commercial community. It is manifestly impracticable and has never been suggested."[42]

Amir Ali, the chairman of the London branch of the League, headed a nine-man deputation to the Secretary of State on January 27, 1909, to persuade him to honour the pledges given. But Morley put them off with a non-committal answer.

Ultimately when the Rules and Regulations were published in November 1909, it was found that both the authors of the reforms had reverted to the position they had taken up on October 1, 1906. It is difficult to explain this reversal of opinion. Perhaps the disarray of the extremist party of the Congress as a result of the disappearance of the principal leaders—Tilak, Aurobindo Ghose, Bipin Chandra Pal, from the scene, and of the severe repressive measures which demoralized the others, removed the danger of opposition, perhaps the abject welcome of the reforms by the Moderate Congress at its session of 1908 removed the apprehensions of Morley, "that in picking up the Musalman, we don't drop our Hindu parcels."[43] So the temptation to retain Muslim goodwill, "a loyal mainstay to us"[44] overcame liberal scruples.

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[42] House of Commons, August 5, 1909. Ronaldshay's speech quotes the text of Minto's letter to Morley, dt. May 2, 1909. Cited in Aziz, K. K., *Britain and Muslim India*, p. 68.

Perhaps the opposition of the Indian bureaucracy—most of the local governments suggested communal representation, and its representatives in the Council of the Secretary of State, weighed the scale against the electoral college plans. Minto who was not unaware of the evil effects of the communal representation not only wrote to the heads of provincial governments to denounce Morley's scheme, but actually canvassed the Conservative leaders in England in favour of his own views. Even the King's help was invoked in support of the Muslim demand.

Under the circumstances Morley's 'sword dance' ended in cutting his own toes, while leaving Minto's intact. On February 23, 1909, on moving the second reading of the reforms bill in the House of Lords Morley announced the abandonment of the plan of electoral colleges based on the idea that "composite action would bring the two great communities more closely together."[45]

Thus the foundation of separatism was well and truly laid. Asquith, the Prime Minister, knew it was objectionable, "it discriminates between people, segregating them into classes, on the basis of religious creed", but justified the decision on the specific plea "the distinction between Mohammedan and Hindu was not merely religious but cut deep not only into the traditions and historic past, but the habits and social customs of the people."[46] Even Balfour thought it a novel principle of politics to give weightage to a community on the ground that its coreligionists existed in considerable numbers outside the country.

The fact is it was neither the British desire to remove the fears of the minority—legitimate or otherwise, nor the British fear "that though the Mohammedan is silent he is very strong," which determined the choice, but the British calculation that the arrangement would serve the imperialist interests. The minority community was favoured and the majority spurned because it was necessary to thwart the purpose of the nationalist movement. The revocation of the Partition of Bengal in 1911 without apprehension of confrontation and without consideration for the pledges and without fear of the resentment of the Muslims is an eloquent commentary on Morley-Minto behaviour. The recourse to arguments based on Hindu-Muslim differences was a screen to hide the real object.

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[43] Morley to Minto, January 28, 1909, cited in Das, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

[44] *Minto Papers :* Minto to Morley, December 31, 1908.

[45] House of Lords, February 23, 1909. *H.L. Debates, 5th Series,* Vol. I, Col. 124.

[46] House of Commons, April 1, 1909. *H.C. Debates*. 5th Series, Vol. 3, Col. 533.

Unfortunately, many of the leaders on both sides began to behave so as to justify the stand of the Government. The Congress which met in December 1909, strongly disapproved the creation of separate communal electorates, and objected to the excessive representation given to the Muslims. But Gokhale differed from this point of view. The Hindu Sabha of Lahore presented an address to Minto in April 1909 in which they protested against the special concessions to the Muslims on the ground of religion. The nationalist press echoed these sentiments.

On the other hand the Muslim Leaguers rejoiced at their triumph, believing proudly that Morley had to bend before their powerful organisation. *The Aligarh Institute Gazette* remarked on the resignation of Morley in November 1910 that the services of Morley to the Musalmans of India, in spite of the fears that had caught hold of the Muslim mind that he was a die-hard radical, were worthy of recognition and praise.[47] He had given them important rights which, as Malaviya pointed, were denied to the Hindus.

The Muslim electors were enrolled as such if they paid income-tax on the income of Rs. 3000/- per annum, but the Hindu electors had to pay on the income of three lakh rupees a year. A Muslim graduate of 3 years standing acquired the right to vote, but a Hindu had to be of 30 years standing.

Apart from these the Muslims were given direct elections and weightage.

But there were Muslims who saw through the British game. Ramsay MacDonald recorded in his book, "Some of the farseeing members of the Mohammedan community are already beginning to feel that they have made a mistake. Several spoke to me with bitterness about the way that certain of their leaders had consented to play a game planned for them by Anglo-Indian officials."[48]

It is a pity that the Muslims did not realize that in most political matters their interests were identical with those of the Hindus, and that the scheme of separate representation repudiated their obligations towards the Indian non-Muslims as a whole. In the search for the protection of some minority rights they isolated themselves from the rest of the Indian communities, as if they had no part or lot in their affairs.

Partition Modified

The Muslim euphoria was short-lived. Developments both within India and outside administered unexpected shocks of great severity. In 1910, Morley resigned. The portfolio was transferred to Crewe. His deputy and spokesman in the House of Commons was Montagu.

In India Minto's term was ending and a successor had to be found. Hardinge who was then the Permanent Under Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was chosen for the Viceroyalty.

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[47] *The Aligarh Institute Gazette*, November 16, 1910.

[48] MacDonald, R., *op. cit.*, p. 179.

The policies which the new team pursued on communal matters differed from those of their predecessors, in form but not in substance.

Towards the Muslim countries the Liberal Party's policy was not likely to give satisfaction to the Indian Muslims. Crewe refused to receive the London Muslim League to discuss the Turkish question. Hardinge was equally unfavourable towards the Ottoman rule.

On the constitution of the Aligarh Muslim University also differences arose between the Government and the Trustees of the MAO College.

Outside India the Muslim countries were exposed to mortal dangers. The westernmost bastion of Islam in North Africa, Morocco, had already passed under the French Empire. At the eastern end Egypt had become a British protectorate. England and Russia had entered into a convention by which Iran was divided into spheres of influence. The British had already established special interests in the Persian Gulf. Italy seized Tripoli a province of the Ottoman Empire in 1911. Then the dismemberment of Turkey followed. An alliance of the Christian principalities of the Balkans was formed with Russian support in 1912, in order to attack Turkey which was in the throes of the Young Turk Revolution. In the war that followed (October 1912) Turkey suffered terrible defeats. The result was that the Ottoman Empire lost everything in Europe except a small foothold in Eastern Thrace (including Adrianople, Constantinople and the Straits).

The Balkan wars were hardly over when the First World War started. As England, France and Russia—the Triple Entente, had upheld the claims of the Balkan States against Turkey, and Germany had shown sympathy for the Muslims, it was natural that the Turks should fight in the War on the side of their sympathisers, the German Empire.

The Indian Muslims, especially the Ulama, were greatly excited over the wars. For the first time it had happened that the Ulama—the custodians of religion, "who hold sway over the hearts of the entire community", from Peshawar to Burmah and Kashmir to Madras,"[49] joined the middle class educated Muslims in opposition to the Government.

The educated Muslims were upset by the change in the policy of the Indian Government. The era of upper class politics of loyalty was coming to an end. The Montagu-Chelmsford report noted "throughout the troubled years 1907—10, the Muhammadans, with a few unimportant exceptions, held severely aloof from the revolutionary movements and retained their traditional attitude of sturdy loyalty . . . Since 1911 their attitude has been growing far less acquiescent."[50]

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[49] Muhsinul Mulk's speech, quoted in Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

[50] *Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms*, p. 14.

The reason was that although Morley had assured the Muslims that the Partition of Bengal was a settled fact, he really never approved of the measure. Then the Morley-Minto reforms had weighed the balance too far in favour of the Muslims, greatly annoying the majority community and obliging them to establish a purely communal organisation to protect their rights, *viz.*, the Hindu Mahasabha. Many Congressmen had sympathy with its objects. Such Congress stal warts as Madan Mohan Malaviya, Lajpat Rai and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, in spite of their Congress loyalties, supported the Hindu Mahasabha.

The repressive policy of Minto had produced a superficial calm, but the terrorist movement appeared to be as strong as ever. This was demonstrated in the attempt on the life of Minto (November 13, 1909) and the murder of Jackson on December 21, 1909, and confirmed when a bomb was thrown on Hardinge in Delhi (December 1912). Terrorism was the outcome of the Partition.

It is not surprising that Crewe and Hardinge decided upon a policy which would heal the wounds of the Hindus, and win the goodwill of the nationalists. In order to achieve the maximum effect for the changeed policy and to exploit the traditional sentiment of loyalty to the royal person, the drama of the Coronation Durbar was staged at Delhi. The King was brought out to India in order to announce the new policy. Incidentally the reversal of Curzon's Partition and Morley's settled fact by King's proclamation was expected to blunt the edge of Tory opposition.

On December 12, 1911, Delhi witnessed scenes of resplendent pomp and grandeur. All the Indian princes robed in costumes of silk embroidered with silver and gold and bedecked with glittering jewels were in attendance. The highest officials including the Secretary of State, the Viceroy, the Commander-in-Chief, the provincial governors, the members of the Executive Council of the Viceroy and others wearing their impressive uniforms, representing the might of the Empire and testifying to the significance of the majestic occasion were present· With trumpets blaring, big drums beating and the Union Jack proudly fluttering in the blue sky in the crisp December air, and surrounded by a great array of caparisond elephants, well-equipped horses, smart British and Indian troops and a vast concourse of eagerly awaiting crowds, the King proclaimed the annulment of the Partition of Bengal and the transfer of the capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi. It was thought that the two measures would meet the need to balance the wo communities—the first would please the Hindus and the second give consolation to the Muslims. Both these aims failed of achievement.

New administrative arrangements were made. While Bihar, Orissa and Chota Nagpur, and Assam retained their Hindu majority, the new province of Bengal was constituted with a small Muslim majority. Bengal was thus united linguistically but distracted by the communalism recently awakened.

The furore created by the Partition had largely subsided but the issue of transfer of power was growing in insistence. The Bengalis certainly felt happy as Ambika Charan Mazumdar's statement indicates, and the Moderates felt justified, but the atmosphere had changed and the unification of Bengal made little difference.

Muslim Reaction

On the other hand, the Muslim reaction was bitter. Viqarul Mulk the incurable loyalist was constrained to admit, "It is now manifest like the midday sun, that after seeing what has happened lately, it is futile to ask the Muslims to place their reliance on Government."[51]

But his was a lonely voice. For apart from a few protests and expressions of disappointment the Muslim reaction to the rearrangements in Bengal was unexcited.

The Aga Khan had sagely advised, "looking at the position of Islam in India as a whole, I doubt if it will be found that it was a good thing to be in a clear majority in one province and a minority in almost every other. The disadvantages of such a situation are obvious.... The Partition had deeply wounded the sentiments of the great Bengali-speaking millions of India. Anything that permanently alienates and offends the sentiments and interests of millions of Indians, be they Moslem or Hindu, is undoubtedly in itself an undesirable thing."[52]

The comment of the editor of the *Comrade* does not indicate much difference from Aga Khan's opinions.[53]

Minto and the British bureaucrats had conjured up the spectre of red ruin and infernal commotion if the aggressive Muslims, unlike the mild Hindus, were crossed and antagonised. Morley had been duly impressed by the argument and had refused to reopen the question. When Hardinge and Crewe, however, unsettled the settled fact without putting the prairie on fire, it was as clear as day that Government magnified or played down the communal bogey to suit its own immediate purpose.

By the misfortunes falling on their co-religionists abroad, the Muslims in India were shocked into frenzy. The poet Iqbal shed bitter tears over the rape of Tripoli and addressed his heart-rending complaint to God (*shikwah*) against the cruel fate. He called upon the Muslims to revive Islam and unite if they wanted the solution of their difficulties. Islam was a universal brotherhood territorially organised and attached to the bases of land, race and nationality. He wrote

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[51] Albiruni, A.H., *Makers of Pakistan and Modern Muslim India*, p. 107.

[52] *The Comrade*, February 10, 1912.

[53] *Ibid.*

بنا ھمارے حصار ملت کی اتحاد وطن نہیں ھے -

(the foundation of the fort of the Muslim community is not the unity of nationhood.)

Abul Kalam Azad began to flay British policy alive in his newly started (June 1912) weekly, *Al-Hilal*. His fiery articles sent a wave of indignation and fury throughout the Muslim community. Muhammad Ali started the *Comrade* in English and *Hamdard* in Urdu in January 1911, to rouse the Muslims to concerted action. Zafar Ali Khan's *Zamindar* (Lahore) wrote vitriolic articles denouncing British treachery.

In 1912, a medical mission led by Dr. Ansari was sent to Turkey. Funds were collected and volunteers enrolled.

When the War broke out in August 1914, the situation became grim. Plans to overthrow British rule in India were prepared. Mahmud al Hasan of Deoband with the help of Dr. Ansari and others sent Obaidullah Sindhi to Kabul to obtain help from the Amir of Afghanistan in their undertaking. A provisional government with Mahendra Pratap as President was set up in Kabul.

Later Mahmud al Hasan proceeded with Ahmad Husain Madni and others to Mecca in order to induce the Turks to support the rising in India. Silk letters were secretly despatched to India, and Afghanistan for distribution.

But luck was against them. Faisal of Arabia rebelled against the Turkish empire, and joined hands with the British. Mahmud al Hasan and his companions were apprehended and deported to Malta, where they remained as prisoners till the end of the war.

Muslim League's Character Changed

The Muslim League leaders were confronted with a difficult situation. They found it impossible to continue on the old lines. Some of them quit the organisation, for instance, the Aga Khan, the Nawab of Dacca; the aristocratic top notchers found the situation too hot and kept away. Fresh blood was infused. Men like Jinnah and Muhammad Ali took the reins in their hands, and eventually prevailed upon Ulama to join. The upper class closed organisation was transforming itself into a middle class movement.

The change brought the League and the Congress closer. But the collaboration which now began was more of the nature of an alliance of two organised and self-conscious bodies representing two distinct communities with their special problems and ideologies, for mutual aid against a common foe, than of fusion.

The Hindu-Muslim cooperation and unity of the years 1911-22, demonstrated that it was no longer possible to think in terms of a homogeneous and monolithic nationalism, and that in order to achieve eventually such a nationalism it would be necessary to pass through a stage of polycentric socio-political order. Unfortunately the goal proved unattainable.

In 1912, however, it appeared as if Sir Syed had been defeated and Shibli vindicated. In the session of the League held at Lucknow in 1913, the object of the League was changed and in the place of promotion of loyalty towards British Government, "attainment under the aegis of the British Crown, of self-government suited to India" was substituted. At the next session (1915) a farther step was taken in strengthening the Congress and League relations. The two met at the same place, Bombay, and a large number of Congress leaders, *e.g.* Gandhiji, Malaviya, Sarojini Naidu, attended the League session. The Presidents—S.P. Sinha (Congress) and Mazharul Haq (League), exchanged views.

Jinnah moved a resolution in the League session to appoint a committee for formulating a common scheme of reforms authorised to confer with other political organisations.

In 1916 the Congress and the League again held their sessions at the same time and in the same place, Lucknow. Ambika Charan Mazumdar presided over the first and Jinnah over the second. The two bodies came to a complete agreement on the reforms which they would urge upon the Government. The Congress conceded the League demand for separate electorates in all the provinces (Panjab and Bengal included). The League moderated its view on weightage, agreeing to 50 per cent seats in the Panjab and 40 per cent in Bengal, thus giving up the demand for seats in proportion to population. In the Muslim majority provinces the Muslim representation was to be twice as much as the ratio of the respective population of Hindus and Muslims. The Muslim apprehension concerning their culture and religious laws were removed by the provision that no bill or resolution concerning a community could be passed if three-fourths of the representatives of that community were opposed to it.

The Lucknow Pact was an emphatic refutation of the theories that agreement between Hindus and Muslims was impossible under any circumstance, because of their religious differences. The Pact showed that there was no inherent, infallible, impossible barrier which could not yield to the spirit of accommodation, common sense and reason.

The Lucknow Pact was the achievement of two political bodies dominated by leaders possessing similar ideological backgrounds and intellectual approach. Jinnah, Muhammad Ali, Ansari, Raja of Mahmudabad on the one side, and Mazumdar, Surendranath Banerjea, Motilal Nehru and Tilak on the other spoke language, mutually comprehensible. Terms like home rule, responsible government, constitutional amendment, were on the tongue of both. If the Congress at Lucknow was comprised of the Moderates and Extremists, the Muslim League enjoyed the support of the advanced wing of the intellectuals and the Ulama.

But the signs of storm which would scatter these delicate combinations were already visible on the horizon. The War was severely straining the patience of the Muslims. Before Turkey had jumped into the fray, the President of the *Anjuman Khuddam-i-Kaaba* (Servants of the holy mosque of Mecca) wired to the Sultan of Turkey, urging upon him either to support Britain against Germany or to keep neutral. Four days later Turkey took the plunge.

The Muslim opinion became divided. Some considered it their duty to remain loyal to the Government and help it in the war. Others were concerned with the future of the Ottoman Caliph. They had rushed to his aid during the Balkan Wars. Now, they began to devise plans in support of Turkey. Among other leaders were Mahmud al Hasan (Deoband), Abdul Bari (Lucknow), Ajmal Khan and Ansari (Delhi), Abul Kalam Azad (Calcutta) and the Ali brothers. They sent agents to the Frontier Province, Afghanistan and Arabia with the object of inducing the Turks to advance with the assistance of Germany towards India, which would rise in their favour and overthrow the British yoke. The triumph of the German arms on the Western front and the failure of the British expedition to Gallipoli and the campaign in Mesopotamia raised their hopes high.

In India they exerted their influence to bring about changes in the objects of the Muslim League. Their success was noteworthy, as the League was led to embrace the Congress creed and to enter the Lucknow Pact.

The Government took counter measures to conciliate the Muslims so as not to lose the loyalty of the community. The British officers assured the Muslim Ulama that the holy places of Islam in Arabia and Mesopotamia would be secure from attack or molestation.

The governments of the Allied countries confirmed the assurance. Lloyd George promised to maintain the integrity of the Turkish homeland. On the basis of these assurances the Muslim troops were made to fight the Ottoman armies in Mesopotamia and other regions.

The Amir of Afghanistan was dissuaded from extending support to the Indian revolutionaries and Sharif Hussain of *Mecca* was prevailed upon by Lawrence to revolt against the Ottoman empire and join the British forces to drive the Turks out of Mesopotamia.

In India prosecutions were launched against the anti-British elements. Abul Kalam Azad's paper, *Al-Hilal*, was stopped and the editor kept under restraint at Ranchi for the duration of the war. Muhammad Ali who had published the article "The Choice of the Turk" in justification of Turkey's action in joining Germany, was ordered to suspend the publication of the *Comrade* and was interned along with his brother at Lansdowne, later at Chhindwara in C.P.

Repression did not stop with the Muslim leaders. It enfolded the movement for Home Rule. Annie Besant and Tilak who held that India's contribution to the war effort had earned for her a change in the political status, started agitation for Home Rule. On June 16, 1917 Annie Besant with two of her colleagues was interned. The Congress and League sessions in Calcutta in 1917, confirmed the Lucknow Pact of the previous year.

The year 1918 marks the inauguration of a new era in the struggle for independence. The war in Europe came to an end with the resounding defeat of the Central European powers. Turkey capitulated on October 31, 1918, and Germany on November 11. The extremely harsh terms imposed upon Turkey by the Treaty of Sevres reduced her to utter ruin. Mustafa Kamal Pasha, however, by his heroic efforts saved her, but she lost the control of the Arab lands including the holy places of Islam.

The conduct of Britain towards Turkey was treacherous. Lloyd George in a speech to the Trade Unions on January 5, 1918, had pledged:

"We are not fighting to deprive Turkey of its capital, or of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor or Thrace, which are predominantly Turkish by race."

Yet goaded by him the Greeks attacked the Turks. They occupied Smyrna, entered Adrianople to capture islands in the Aegean and spread over the coast line. However, eventually Mustafa Kamal foiled the Greek effort and threw the enemy out of Smyrna. At Lausanne Curzon negotiated a fresh treaty which revised the terms of Sevres. But the future of the Caliphate and the holy lands remained unresolved.

Khilafat Question

The apprehension that the places might pass out of the control of the Muslims was dreadful to contemplate. The Muslim community was stirred to its depths.

Fazlul Haq presiding over the Muslim League session at Delhi (1918) observed : "To me the future of Islam in India seems to be wrapped in gloom and anxiety. Every instance of a collapse of the Muslim powers of the world is bound to have an adverse influence on the political importance of our community in India."[54]

Of special significance was the fact that the session was attended by the Ulama—Abdul Bari, Azad Sobhani, Ibrahim Sialkoti, Sanaullah Amritsari, Ahmad Said, Kifayatullah, Abdul Latif, which gave a new turn to Muslim politics. Another significant incident of the session was the withdrawal of Jinnah and Mahmudabad from the League because they were opposed to the resolution on *Khilafat*.

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[54] Fazlul Haq's Presidential Address. cited in Sayeed, Khalid Bin, ***Pakistan the Formative Phase*** (1960), p. 46.

Soon after (September 1919) a conference was held at Lucknow at which Ibrahim Haroon Jafar, a member of the Legislative Council, presided and a number of notable Muslim personalities attended. At the conference an All-India Khilafat Committee was formed with Seth Chhotani of Bombay as President, and Shaukat Ali as the Secretary (on release from internment).

The first Khilafat Conference[55] was held at Delhi on 23rd November 1919, under the chairmanship of Fazlul Haq. Gandhiji, Motilal Nehru and Malaviya were present. On the second day Gandhiji was voted to the chair. He spoke on the situation and explained that the proper remedy for the wrongs of the Muslims was non-cooperation and not boycott.

In December, the Khilafat Committee and the Congress met at Amritsar. There was much fraternisation between the two bodies. The Khilafat Conference decided to send a deputation to the Viceroy of India and the Prime Minister of England to present their views to the Indian and British Governments.

When the Committee met in Delhi on January 20, 1920, Gandhiji presented the programme of non-cooperation which was accepted at the Conference at Meerut a few days later. At Calcutta (February 20) the Conference under Abul Kalam Azad's chairmanship fixed a Khilafat day and adopted a resolution in favour of the non-cooperation movement. In the succeeding months a number of other meetings were held. As the deputation to the Viceroy (January 1920) and the Prime Minister (March 1920) had proved fruitless it was decided to send a notice to the Viceroy informing him that if the Khilafat demands were not conceded the non-cooperation movement would start on August 1.

The success of the non-cooperation programme depended upon the cooperation of the Khilafat Committee and the Congress. The All-India Congress Committee discussed the matter at the Allahabad meeting on May 30, 1920, and then a special session of the Congress was held on September 8, at Calcutta, Lajpat Rai presiding. The Congress gave its approval to the non-cooperation movement but tacked the objective of *Swaraj* to that of *Khilafat*.

The stage was now set for a political upheaval which during the short period it lasted, changed the face of the country. The immediate consequences of the acceptance of Gandhiji's proposals by the Khilafat Committee and the Congress were :

(1) The Indian National Congress which had become united in 1916, was split again. Those who disapproved of the new programme

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[55] Second, if the Lucknow Conference is considered the first.

of action seceded and formed the All-India Liberal Federation.

(2) For the next 25 years the Congress was an instrument of Gandhiji's will, and its politics was overlaid with religious—though not denominational, fervour.

(3) The Muslim League lost its popularity and Muslim politics passed under the domination of the religious leaders. Men like Jinnah, Wazir Hasan, Mahmudabad, Fazli Hussain, Muhammad Shafi, who had been the pillars of the Muslim League were relegated to the background and the Khilafat Committee and the Jamiatul Ulama assumed the lead of Muslim politics.

(4) The Jamiatul Ulama-i-Hind was founded in 1919 at Amritsar. Mahmud al Hasan who had returned from Malta became its president and a large number of the most prominent Ulama of the country joined as members. The Jamiat gave its powerful support to the Gandhian movement of non-cooperation. After 1924 it played an active and significant role in the struggle for freedom.

(5) The Hindu and Muslim masses were drawn into the political struggle in increasing numbers. Religious emotions were deeply stirred with the result that the followers of both became more acutely conscious of their own individuality. Religion and politics became confused.

(6) The orthodox Hindu and the middle class secular-minded groups felt disquieted and dismayed, but the flood of emotion was too strong for them and unable to guide the current they stood on the bank and helplessly watched.

Since the day of Turkey's surrender excitement and alarm had been rapidly growing. The urgings of the Indian Muslims supported by, the Indian nationalists were of no avail and frustrated and desperate people in search of a remedy found in Gandhiji's proposals the only practical solution of their excruciating difficulties. The Muslims accepted his lead and responded magnificently to his direction.

Gandhiji on his part was religiously devoted to the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity. He exercised his magnetic personality and unique prestige to win over the Congress in favour of the Khilafat demand. The Congress, in fact the whole of India, was writhing under the heavy blows of the British hammer. A committee had been appointed by Government headed by Rowlatt—a British Judge, to recommend legislation to meet the menacing situation. In February 1919, two bills were introduced in the Imperial Legislative Council to give effect to the recommendations of the Rowlatt Committee. This was a challenge. The gauntlet was taken up and *Satyagraha* was started. A call for general strike or *Hartal* was given, and excitement mounted daily and hourly. The country was ablaze with defiant agitation.

Michael O'Dwyer, the Lt. Governor of the Punjab, determined to hold aloft the banner of imperial prestige and to ruthlessly crush the daring agitators. The policy culminated in the large scale massacre of Jallianwala Bagh followed by atrocious measures of barbaric cruelty and humilitation, which revived the memories of O'Neill's blood-thirstiness of 1857.

The reply of the Congress was to launch a mass struggle against the Government with the triple purpose of winning *Swaraj*, rectification of the Punjab wrongs, and rehabilitation of the *Khilafat*. The combination was significant as it meant the recognition of a purely communal religious demand as of equal importance with the national demand for *Swaraj*. In spite of its concept of territorial nationalism and logical striving for a unitary sovereign state, the Congress was compelled to give its assent to the achievement of an extra-territorial sacramental aim.

Gandhiji's decision was largely based on moral grounds. He argued that it was the duty of every section of the Indian society to help every other section in its woes and troubles. Membership of a society would be meaningless if its members did not share in the joys and sorrows of all. The Muslims of India had been plunged into pain and resentment by the behaviour of the British Government. In their sorrow and search for remedies it was morally incumbent upon the Hindus to give unstinted support to the Muslims.

He was also of opinion that the Muslim cause was morally justified and therefore deserving of support on human grounds. Lloyd George, the Prime Minister, had given definite promises to overcome the qualms of the Muslim troops to fight against the Turks. These promises were conveniently consigned to oblivion as soon as the war ended. Human and moral considerations justified action to ensure the observance of the promises made.

Gandhiji's reasoning was irrefutable. The principles he enunciated were unexceptionable. But their application to the present case was questionable.

Unfortunately neither Gandhiji nor the Indian Khilafatists realised that their objective was neither politically practicable nor wholly justified. The sympathy of the Indian Musalmans with the Muslim countries of Africa, Europe and Asia was wholly idealistic, and entirely impractical. The Muslim countries of the world were not bound together in Islamic or any other unity. Their relations among themselves varied from alliance and cooperation to hostility and war, but the Indian Muslims sought to be friendly to all of them, irrespective of their attitude towards the Indian Muslims as the Muslims of other lands.

They did not realize that international affairs cannot be determined or influenced by a people however numerous who are not sovereign or independent.

The maintenance of the Caliphate office with all its ancient dignity and power required reinstatement of the Ottoman Empire to its prewar status; that is, the imposition of Ottoman rule upon the Arabs, who were unwilling to accept the resurrection of that rule. Then with the exception of the Indian Muslims—Sunnis, Musalmans of other countries had not shown much interest in the matter. In fact the very question of the holding of the Caliphate by the Ottoman Sultan was controversial. India since the establishment of Mughal rule in the sixteenth century had refused to recognise the Caliphate of the Turkish sultans. It was only in 1876 that England anxious to maintain the influence and power of the Sultan as a barrier against Russian advance towards the Mediterranean, persuaded some Indian Muslims to accept the Turkish Caliphate. Even then Sir Syed, an inheritor of the Mughal tradition, refused to acknowledge the Caliphate, much to the chagrin of Syed Jamal-al-Din Afghani, the promulgator of the idea of Islamic unity under the leadership of the Turkish Caliph. In fact there were quite a number of claimants to the Caliphate at the time.[56] Thus, based upon shaky foundations the effects of Gandhiji's campaign were not altogether happy.

At the commencement of the movement the Ulama gave a decree (*Fatwa*) declaring India to be the abode of war (*darul harb*), implying that it was the duty of the Muslims either to declare a holy war (*Jihad*) or emigrate (*hijrat*). Nearly 18,000 persons from the western parts of India chose the second alternative and marched towards the Muslim country of Afghanistan. For the Amir the prospect of settling a large number of Indians in his poor country was frightening. Religion or no religion, he refused them admission. A terrible tragedy followed. But its lesson was lost upon the Muslims, who continued to harp upon the oneness of the *millat* under the headship of an Imam.

Iqbal poured out his faith in Pan-Islamic solidarity and his denunciation of nationalism as the greatest enemy of religion in such powerfully moving poetry as to carry the Muslims—young and old, off their feet.

Politics receded and religion took their place. The Jamiatul Ulama issued a religious decree (*Fatwa*) signed by over nine hundred divines approving the non-cooperation programme and advising all Muslims to carry it out as a religious duty. Azad who completely identified religion with politics, reminded the Muslims that they owed it to Allah to discharge their duty by waging *Jihad* relentlessly. He exhorted them thus :

"Muslims should neither think of politics nor education, should neither praise freedom nor get entangled in the shackles of slavery. They are not supposed to think or decide on these things. It was God who had to decide on these things and He had decided. Their duty is only to act strictly in accordance with the commands of God which are incorporated in the *Quran*. They should empty their minds of all man made ideas and national sentiments and surrender themselves to the instruction and guidance of the Supreme Educator....Muslims have no desires of their own, no plans, no policy. Their desire and policy is to act completely according to the dictates of Islam."[57]

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[56] Arnold, *The Caliphate*.

For Gandhiji the religious character of the Khilafat question was an opportunity of a lifetime. He said, "if the Hindus wish to cultivate eternal friendship with the Mussalmans, they must perish with them in the attempt to vindicate the honour of Islam."[58]

The eruption of such religious emotionalism of intensity was bound to lead to extravagance in speech and action. What is worse, it hardened tempers, discounted rational consideration of problems and put a premium on uncompromisingness.

But for the moment the movement spread fast. The Congress and the Khilafat Committee had adopted a common programme for the rectification of the Khilafat wrongs and the establishment of Indian *Swaraj* as a guarantee against the repetition of similar misdeeds.

The Khilafat Conference which met at Karachi on July 8—10, 1921, adopted a non-cooperation programme, whose main items were :

(1) determination to secure complete fulfilment of the *Khilafat* demands;

(2) rejection of any terms imposing limitation on Turkish sovereignty;

(3) refusal to accept non-Muslim control over *Jazirat ul Arab* or the holy places;

(4) declaration that it was religiously unlawful for a Muslim to continue in the British army; and

(5) announcement of breaking of laws, beginning of civil disobedience with the concurrence of the Congress, proclaiming of complete independence and establishment of Republic of India, in case the British Government took military measures against the Turks.

Muslims and Hindus vied with one another in defying the Government, breaking the laws and preaching sedition. Thousands cheerfully went to jail, and bore lathi charges without retaliation. Lawyers abandoned practice, teachers resigned service and students withdrew from schools and colleges. The Trustees of the Aligarh University were pressed to refuse to accept government grant. A hundred students left as the Trustees refused and founded the Jamia Millia Islamia.

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[57] Sayeed, Khalid bin, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 62; also Gandhi, M.K., *Communal Unity* (Ahmedabad, Navajivan, 1949), pp. 5 and 4.

Gandhiji, Azad, Muhammad Ali and other leaders toured the country, denouncing the government's obstinacy, collecting funds and raising volunteer corps. The ferment grew in intensity and passions rocketted high.

Gandhiji in pursuance of his policy of peace had several interviews with the Viceroy Lord Reading, in May 1921, but had no success. The Government had made up its mind to suppress the movement. Prosecution of Muhammad Ali and other leaders for the resolution passed at Karachi declaring recruitment in the army contrary to religion had already been started.

On September 14, Muhammad Ali and his brother Shaukat Ali were arrested. Azad was already in prison; in November Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal were sentenced to six months' imprisonment. In December C.R. Das shared a similar fate.

The arrival of the Prince of Wales on a visit to India in November acted like the red rag. He was greeted with boycott and black flags wherever he went. Between December 1921 and January 1922, thirty thousand arrests had been made.

Repression added fuel to the fire. Restraint wore thin. The movement spread to the masses. Crowds of thousands of people gathered and listened to irate mob orators. Densely attended processions paraded the villages and towns, and heaps of foreign cloth were publicly burnt. The police intervened and its atrocious behaviour led to rioting. The vicious circle of agitation, repression and more agitation was established.

In mounting excitement even some of the leaders lost their balance. Muhammad Ali in the course of his ardour made a remark which jarred upon the ears of some Hindu leaders. The references to Muslim history—its warlike exploits and conquests, did not sound as sweet to the Hindu ears as to the Muslim. Shraaddhananda and Malaviya drew the attention of Gandhiji to the frequent recitation of militant verses from the Quran.

Among the illiterate and fanatical Moplahs—Muslim peasants of Kerala, the propaganda of the Mullahs had a heady effect. Agrarian troubles were not uncommon in this part of the world, then the expectation of independence and overthrow of British rule sent through the community a thrill of excitement, which in August 1921 burst into rebellion. It was aimed both against the landlords and the Government. The Moplahs fought the British troops sent against them, looted a railway station and set up Khilafat rule in Ernad Taluk. Plunder, arson, murder and other atrocities were let loose. The Hindus became victims of the terror. Many of them were forced to renounce Hinduism and accept Islam

Rumours exaggerated the enormity of the criminal incidents. Some Hindus blamed the Muslim community as a whole for the happenings in Kerala, some Muslims justified the horrible conduct of the Moplahs. Hindu-Muslim unity was shaken. Hindus started a *Shuddhi* (conversion) movement under the lead of Shraddhananda and a movement for *Sangathan* (organisation) under the leadership of Malaviya. The Muslims replied with the counter movements of *Tabligh* (spread of Islam) and *Tanzim* (organisation of Muslims).

Then, of a sudden, on February 5, 1922, a clash took place between the police and the stragglers of a procession at Chauri Chaura, a village in Gorakhpur district, U.P. The constables opened fire and on the exhaustion of their ammunition retired into the police office (*thana*). The mob set fire to the building and twenty-two constables were burnt alive. For Gandhiji the incident was so monstrously distressing that he decided to call off the movement. After consulting the Congress Working Committee on February 11, but without sounding the Khilafat Committee, the programme of active civil disobedience was cancelled. Gandhiji observed a five-day fast, and made a pathetic confession ot his mistakes in the *Young India* of February 16.

In justification of the step it may be said that Gandhiji held truth and non-violence as dearer than everything, dearer even than Swaraj. Non-violence was for him the absolute, the ultimate value. Nothing, therefore, could be more shocking, more destructive of his deepest convictions than the degeneration of a movement led by him into violence. He had no alternative, the ethical imperative must prevail and so the broadening deepening stream of non-cooperation was dammed.

Apart from its moral validity the stoppage had a practical aspect too. Apparently the Congress organisation was losing control and the masses were moving towards anarchy and chaos. It was necessary to assert the leadership of the Congress so that it might be possible to revive the movement in future. Mass violence could only bring about bloodshed on a large scale, and the demoralisation which would follow would be worse than that after the Revolt of 1857.

The suspension of non-cooperation was a triumph for the national organisation, in so far as its orders were obeyed. But the consequences were not altogether satisfactory. In fact some of them were positively harmful.

Defeat brings in its train resentment, factionalism and diminution of faith in the leadership.

Motilal Nehru and C.R. Das were indignant and began to plan a new party to fight the Government. Their discussions led to the foundation of the Swaraj Party which could have broken the Congress but for the forbearance and prudence of Gandhiji.

Jawaharlal gave expression to the disappointment and anguish of the younger generation who did not fully appreciate the moral character of the movement and regarded the suspension as a wanton surrender of the political gains already achieved. He wrote:

"We in prison learnt, to our amazement and consternation, that Gandhiji had stopped the aggressive aspects of our struggle... We were angry when we learnt of this stoppage of our struggle at a time when we seemed to be consolidating our position and advancing on all fronts."[59] This brought doubts about the validity of the principle of non-cooperation. He said, "for us and for the National Congress as a whole the non-violent method was not, and could not be, a religious or an unchallengeable creed or dogma. It could only be, a policy and a method promising certain results, and by those results it would have to be finally judged."[60]

It does not require stressing that this point of view was the exact opposite of the principles by which the Muslim Khilafatists were moved. The existence of such divergent opinion in the organisations which had sponsored the movement was bound to lead to trouble.

The grand structure of Hindu-Muslim unity which Gandhiji had so assiduously built was damaged. Since 1911 the Indian Muslims had started the repudiation of the policy laid down by the Aligarh school of politicians. In 1913 they had accepted the goal of self-government for India. The London branch of the League resolved (14 July 1914) on the desirability of cultivating mutual goodwill and understanding between the different races of India to strengthen the new national self-consciousness. Muhammad Ali expressed his firm belief "that the progress and well-being of Musalmans are bound up with the progress and well-being of the country in which we live."[61]

Wazir Hasan prominent League leader read a paper before the Indian Association, London, on October 11, 1913, in which he observed:

"It appears to me that while not quarrelling with the existence of separate communities as separate political entities, we can yet progress towards the formation of a nation in India evolved out of a gradual process of diminution and minimising the points of difference and developing the points of concord between the two communities.[62]

His concept of the Indian nation was defined in these terms:

"I find the vision of the future to be one of a united India, but the union appears to be one not of individuals but of communities—a political entity on federal lines- a federation of faiths, of faiths no less strong than a federation of states in America or of kingdoms in Germany

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[59] Nehru, Jawaharlal, *An Autobiography,* p. 81.

[60] Nehru, Jawaharlal, *Towards Freedom,* pp. 79-83.

[61] *The Comrade,* September 20, 1913.

[62] *Ibid.,* November 8, 1913.

—a union of people "not like to like" but like to difference, self-reverent each and reverencing each."[63]

The formulation shows how confused the minds of the most eminent and the most liberal Muslims were concerning the difference between community and nationality.

The Aga Khan drew attention to the appearance of a new type of Muslim in an article which he contributed to the *Edinburgh Review*. He said:

"Take any typical young Mahomedan of the upper middle class today, and it will be found that apart from the traditional religion of his family, his education has been entirely on the lines of the Hindu of the same class.....The men brought up under the new system are coming to the front and have influenced political views and sentiments among the educated men of different communities. The unity is a measure of the growth of Indian nationhood."[64]

With growing disillusionment the Muslim attitude underwent a progressive change—both inward and outward. The revision of the Partition of Bengal had been a sore trial, the Balkan wars which inflicted deep humiliation upon the Turks exacerbated the Muslim bitterness, but the defeat in the First World War and the harsh treatment meted out to Turkey in the treaty of Sevrès brought their frustration and anger to a climax.

These events brought the communities closer together. In 1915 the Congress and the League met at Bombay and had common consultations. In 1916, the Lucknow Pact was signed. From 1918 the Congress under the direction of Gandhiji and the Khilafat Committee guided by the champions of Islam—the Ulama, engaged in a combined fight against the Government.

But the fight was halted before the goal was reached. Apart from the other consequences it badly affected the relations between the communities. The Hindus had been disturbed by the vehemence of the militant propaganda of the Khilafatists, the exaggerated reports of Moplah excesses greatly upset them and the two began to drift apart and to betake to exclusively communal courses. Some Ulama began to cast doubts upon Gandhiji's sincerity. While the Khilafat question was still unsettled he had withdrawn the movement and left them in the lurch. Jawaharlal's non-religious approach and secular concept of democracy conflicted with their belief in the identity of religion and politics and the non-amenability of sacred laws to any alteration through processes of human legislation. Fissiparous tendencies began to develop. They were greatly strengthened by the removal of Gandhiji who was arrested in March, tried and sentenced to six year simprisonment.

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[63] *Ibid.*

[64] *Ibid.*, February, 1914.

The Khilafat movement lost its *raison d'etre* when the Turks in the negotiations at Lausanne during 1922-23 quietly dropped the question of suzerainty over the Holy places and then on March, 3, 1924 abolished the Caliphate itself. The Indian Muslims felt mortified but were helpless, never afterwards did extra-territorial questions evoke comparable enthusiasm. But the fiery experience through which they had passed left indelible marks on the mind. So whether they supported the Congress or opposed it, discussed nationalism or independence, debated political unity or partition their approach was hence forth different from what it had been before. Both the westernized middle class spokesmen and the traditionist theological scholars were becoming agreed on the fundamental unity of the Muslim problem in India.

The *Khilafat* agitation, whose main plank was the conservation of the Ottoman Empire, was an extraordinary movement. Till the middle of the nineteenth century the Indian Muslim had felt no concern in the affairs of Turkey. In fact they did not recognise the Ottoman Sultan as the Caliph. Then in the third quarter of the 19th century things began to change. By then the British conquest of India, the extinction of the last symbol of the Mughal rule, the Revolt of 1857, the British revengefulness and hostility to the Muslim, altogether had a cumulative effect in engendering and aggravating feelings of helplessness and despair.

The Muslim reaction against these unpropitious conditions was twofold. The traditionist scholars—the Ulama, reacted against the British domination by open violent opposition whenever the conditions appeared favourable, *e.g.* Waliullahi inspired Sayyid Ahmad Brelvi's *Jihad,* or by secret anti-British propaganda among the masses in India and the Muslim countries of Asia and Africa. The western educated Muslims, on the other hand, followed the policy of winning the favour of the Government in order to recover their lost position and influence, and for this object allowing themselves to be used as instruments of the British policy of destroying the growing popularity of the nationalist movement.

Soon, however, the latter section realised that not only was the attitude undignified, it was also of limited utility. A small number of the community might profit by professing loyalty to their masters, but the interests of the Muslim masses as a whole and what mattered a great deal more to the Ulama the interests of the world community of Islam, were either wholly neglected or actively opposed by the British imperialist power.

After 1910, the two sections approached one another. The Ulama had been greatly influenced by the teachings of Syed Jamal-al-Din Afghani, the founder of the Pan-Islamic movement, who wanted to organise the Muslims of the world round the central figure of the Ottoman Caliph. The Indian Muslim masses led by the Ulama had already lost faith in the British, and they were in search of a substitude. The educated Muslims who looked upon the majority community as their rivals and had sought shelter under the British umbrella, discovered that the shelter was leaking. So like the drowning man catching at a straw, both the parties eagerly sought a cause which could lift them from despondency and restore their self-confidence.

The cause of Turkey seemed to point the way out. Thus, in spite of the complete lack of interest of the Turks in Indian Muslim affairs, in spite of the doubtful legality of the Turkish Caliphate, in spite of the Arab's repudiation of the Ottoman dominion, in spite of the uprising in Egypt against Turkish rule, the irritated Indian Muslims were goaded to demonstrate their dislike for the British and to express their predilection for a sentimental Pan-Islamism, by throwing themselves feverishly into the turmoil cf Khilafat agitation.

The surprising feature of this movement was that it was confined to the Muslims of India mainly. No other Muslim people in Asia or Africa gave their moral or material support to the Turkish Sultan or the Caliph. On the other hand, the Amir of Afghanistan who had earlier forbidden the entry of the Indian *muhajirin* into Afghanistan, signed on November 23, 1921, a treaty with the Government cf India establishing good neighbourly relations between the two Governments. Obviously this was a blow to the ideals of Islamic world brotherhood, so dearly cherished by the Indian Muslims. The Arab behaviour was equally discouraging, for they actually rebelled against the Turkish Sultan at the instigation of the British. Then the Indian Muslims themselves were not of one mind. The Muslim soldiers of the British army fought against the Turks throughout the war and the Aga Khan and men of his way of thinking continued to uphold loyalty to the British empire.

The cause of the Caliphate was entirely idealistic. It had no relevance to temporal and political affairs. The Indian Muslims supported the Caliphate on religious grounds. It reflects great credit upon them that for the sake of religion they were prepared to make the greatest sacrifices. But at the same time they imagined that the existence of a strong Muslim power would bolster their self-respect and self-confidence, sustain the consciousness that they were not alone and unbefriended in a hostile world. The idea was quite unrealistic, for the policies of governments, even the Muslim governments, as history abundantly proves, are not guided by religious beliefs.

Nor were the Indian Muslims aware of the extent of the secularization and westernization of the progressive parties in Turkey. Even while the *Khilafat* leaders were threatening the Indian Government with dire consequences—issuing *fatwas* of *jihad* and boycott of military service, the Turkish nationalists under the leadership of Mustafa Kamal were taking steps which finally led to the abolition of the *Khilafat*.

The question of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire was hardly soluble. The empire had been a ramshackle organisation. At one time it included vast territories in Europe, Northern Africa and Asia. Peoples of many religions lived within its boundaries. From the middle of the seventeenth century the process of its disintegration started. In the middle of the nineteenth century the Ottoman Empire had shrunk in size and the Sublime Porte had earned the sobriquet of 'the sick-man of Europe' on the brink of demise. Its Christian provinces were in revolt, and its Arab subjects discontented. The Turks failed to clean the Augean stables and drifted towards chaos. European powers talked of dissolution and partition.

The resentment of the Turks against Britain and Russia made them take the fatal decision of joining the Central powers in the war against Britain and her allies. The decision entailed unforeseen consequences. The Indian Muslim community chivalrously espoused the Turkish cause in order to avert the adverse results of a course adopted deliberately. It is true the British statesmen had given pledges regarding the preservation of the national home of the Turks intact, but shamelessly went back upon them. But the case for ruling the territories outside the national home rested upon no valid basis. It is unfortunate that the Khilafatists chose to fight the Government on issues of questionable expediency, issues whose bearing on Hindu and Muslim India's affairs was marginal, if not quite unsubstantial. For even if India had been independent it is doubtful whether it could exert much influence on the policy of the victorious allies; in its state of dependence it was altogether out of the question.

But argument and reason are at a discount, and may be excusably so, when a people is engaged in so highly emotional, incalculable and unpredictable an enterprise as struggle for independence from foreign rule. Gandhiji's identification with the Muslim cause, though morally and humanly justified, was from the practical and political point of view of dubious value. Subsequent developments gave a melancholy proof of the failure of his objective. The implications of the Khilafat agitation were never clearly realised by the Muslim leaders, or by Gandhiji.

Gandhiji's desire to secure permanent Hindu-Muslim unity by co-operating with the Muslims in the Khilafat agitation had little chance of fulfilment. The causes of the communal antagonism were deep. Their roots went down to the foundations of social, economic and political organisation of the Indian society, and only a transformation of the whole system could remove them. But this transformation was obstructed and slowed by the presence of the third party which wielded political power, and used it to retard economic and social growth and communal unity.

Tackling on a problem of a temporary nature and for a specified object to the demand of an abiding and general character like *Swaraj* or self-government was odd. Success or failure in the case of *Khilafat* agitation was a matter of immediate moment, the process of achieving Swaraj was under the most optimistic calculations a matter of time. The decision on the first ended the problem immediately, the winning of Swaraj opened up an unlimited vista of problems and endeavours to solve them.

The combination tended to polarize the efforts of the two communities; one involved deeply in the extra-territorial question of the Khilafat and the other to the destiny of all Indians irrespective of caste, creed or race; for the Khilafatists it was a matter of primary concern, for the nationalists an accessory to the struggle for independence.

The battle for the first was lost, but not the war. For the movement in spite of its setback had demonstrated what unimagined potentialities were hidden in mass power. It provided invaluable trainingfor the development of qualities which are essential for winning and maintaining freedom *viz.*, organisation, discipline, self-sacrifice.

CHAPTER TEN

SEARCH FOR A NEW POLICY

I The New Team

Minto's term of office came to an end in 1910. A search for his successor had begun as early as 1908 even though two years still remained to the completion of his term, because Morley was becoming restive. The King suggested to the Prime Minister the name of Kitchener for appointment, but both Asquith and Morley considered him unsuitable for the Viceroy's post. So long as the difference persisted no decision could be arrived at. But after King Edward's death in May 1910, Kitchener who had pertinaciously pressed his own candidature, lost the chance, and Hardinge who was the Permanent Under Secretary of State and head of the Foreign Office was selected. He was raised to the peerage and left England for India on November 2, 1910.

About the time of Hardinge's departure a change took place in the office of the Secretary of State for India. Sore at not being asked to Balmoral, inclined to think that he was not being treated with consideration, Morley wrote to the Prime Minister saying that he was tired out and unable to go on. He did not receive from Asquith the sort of letter he expected, and "after a delay during which he expected *de se faire prier* (to be requested) he reiterated his wish to retire. He was taken at his word."[1]

Thus in the first week of November 1910 Crewe who had been the Lord Privy Seal and the Liberal Party leader of the House of Lords, assumed office which he held from 7th November 1910 to 27th May 1915, except for a brief interval from 7th March 1911 to 25th March 1911 when he was ill and Morley officiated for him. In the House of Commons Montagu held charge (1910-14) of the post of the Parliamentary Under Secretary for India.

The new team of Crewe, the Secretary of State, and Hardinge, the Viceroy, lacked the brilliance of its predecessors.

The picture of the Indian political scene which presented itself before their eyes was a chiaroscuro of weak-kneed loyalty and terroristic conspiracy. The British response consisted of a mixture of counterpoise, conciliation and repression. Their predecessors had recognised the emergence of a new spirit in India, but completely failed to understand its true significance. When they retired after giving India the experience of their triaxial policy for five years, the country might have given the appearance of tranquillity on the surface, but nothing significant had been done to mitigate the actual economic, social or political ills from which it suffered. Hence the waves of unrest surging under the ground continued to erupt from time to time.

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[1] Pope-Hennessy, J., *Lord Crewe*, p. 86.

The tide of agitation which flowed over the Indian society during the period 1905 to 1909, had altered the political landmarks. A new combination of forces was rising. The educated and professional groups formed one of its sections. The industrialists and business class joined them in their own interests. They were anxious to replace the British monopolists and the imperialist exploiters who manipulated the policies of external trade and internal marketing conditions. They were attracted by the Swadeshi and Boycott movements in politics. The traditional cultural classes who were revivalists—the Pandits among the Hindus and the Ulama among the Muslims, began to take interest in the independence movement since it aimed at fostering Indian culture through national education, and at overthrowing the domination of foreigners over Indian life and society.

Lastly the working class—labourers, peasants and artisans, began to be drawn into the movement, because it promised to end the colonial economic exploitation.

Crewe and Hardinge inherited a difficult and complicated task from their predecessors. Curzon had sought to make India a submissive tool for employment in the pursuit of imperial policies. In order to further this aim he wanted to smother the growth of the nationalist party whose claims conflicted with the efficient working of the autocratic machinery of Government. Hence he intensified Hindu-Muslim rivalry by creating a Muslim-dominated province as a counterpoise to a Congress-minded Bengal, and dismissed nationalist aspirations for political reforms as inconceivable.

Morley and Minto possessed greater finesse than Curzon, they agreed with the substance of his imperialist policy but differed concerning the means to achieve it. They evolved the three-pronged plan to deal with the situation, but the plan was only partially successful. Its chief success lay in deepening Muslim communal consciousness and generating the sense of nationality among them. Butler, a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, wrote on the 25th November, 1910 at the commencement of Hardinge's Viceroyalty, a letter in which he testified to the antipathy between the Hindus and Muslims. His words are: "never in my experience has Hindu-Mahommedan feeling been so intense as it now is in northern India. People there are beginning to ask for separate courts of justice, separate schools, etc. for the two communities...the Mahommedans have got too much, say the Hindus, we must get back a bit."[2]

The concept of a unitary nationhood was weakened, and in its place the idea of a multicultural, multicentral society grew up. It later developed into the two-nations theory and culminated in two sovereign states.

But as the communal consciousness of the minority grew in intensity, the bitterness and frustration of the majority also increased, and out of it extremism emerged. When its open expression was suppressed by harsh laws and severe executive measures, instead of disappearing it went underground, manifesting itself in widespread conspiracy and terrorism in the country and revolutionary activity abroad, both tending to coalesce in hostility against a common enemy.

The concessions to the opinion of the Nationalists which the Government made by enacting the Government of India Act of 1909 failed of its purpose. The Extremists rejected them out of hand and the Moderates who were initially in their favour, ultimately found them unsatisfactory. Instead of allaying dissatisfaction they widened the gulf between the people and the Government.

The policy of repression had a twofold effect. The removal of the Extremist leaders from the field produced a temporary lull in the public activities, but on the other hand, gave an impetus to the terrorist plots.

Crewe and Hardinge had to face a set of difficult problems.

The Muslims on whom the Government had relied for support began to show signs of disaffection. The foreign policy of Britain and its allies, France and Russia, irritated them and the pro-Muslim declarations of Britain's rival Germany pleased them. The Pan-Islamic propaganda of Turkey kindled their enthusiasm. The result was that the attitude of the Indian Muslims began to change towards Britain.

Then the Morley-Minto structure commenced to show cracks. Crewe, the trusted lieutenant of Asquith, knew that any further appeasement of the Muslims of India was not possible, for British relations with the Sultan of Turkey, the revered Caliph of the Musalmans, were far from cordial, and in the impending war against the German Empire, Turkey was expected to fight on the side of the enemy. However, it was not politic to alienate the Muslim sentiment altogether, specially because the Muslim soldiers of the Indian army might be required to fight against their coreligionists—the Turks.

On the other hand, the majority community was in a state of perpetual hostility which was not desirable. The Partition of Bengal had infuriated the Hindus. The repressive measures against the nationalists and the favours shown to the minority community had added fue to the fire. Until something was done to pacify them the vicious circle of terrorist outrage and savage repression would not be broken. But the Partition was not the only grievance. It had only brought into prominence the basic problem of the value of Indian opinion in relation to Government. The crux of the matter was the question whether the Indian government would be responsive to Indian opinion or not.

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[2] *Hardinge Papers*, Vol. 81 (Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Microfilm).

Crewe and Hardinge were called upon to formulate policies which would soothe the ruffled mind of the Hindus, without antagonising the Muslims, and to meet the nationalist challenge concerning the transfer of responsibility.

II. REVISION OF THE PARTITION

The vicious circle had been initiated by the Partition of Bengal. Morley and Minto, however, had more than once refused to reopen the question. But although Morley had publicly stated that the Partition was a settled fact, he had made no secret of his disapproval of Curzon's measure. Minto had told Surendranath Banerjea "if my country was divided in the way your province has been, I should feel just as you do."[3]

Crewe took the initiative in reopening the discussion. He wrote to Hardinge :

"When I saw His Majesty last Monday, the 22nd January, and we discussed the various topics on which I telegraphed to you, we reopened the question of Bengal with the exordium that I probably should think him quite wrong, but that more than everything else, he had set his heart upon doing something which would, to some extent, satisfy that section of opinion in India which regarded partition as a mistake."[4]

Crewe suggested the redistribution of the eastern provinces, turning reconstituted Bengal into a governor's province like Bombay and Madras and shifting the capital.

Hardinge wrote to Crewe turning down the suggestion of the annulment of Partition. He argued that the question had ceased to excite any real public interest and enthusiasm, that the agitation was dying out, and that it would be a breach of faith with the Muslims who would regard it as a Hindu triumph and a blow to the Muslims all over India. He was not prepared to revert to the *status quo ante Curzonum,* nor did he like the suggestion about conversion of the status of Bengal and arrangements regarding Assam, Bihar and Orissa, and Calcutta. He advised Crewe to abandon the idea and concluded "I prefer to bear the ills we have than to fly to others that we know not of."[5]

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[3] Banerjea, Surendranath, *A Nation in Making* (1931), p. 283.

[4] *Hardinge Papers,* Crewe to Hardinge, 27 January 1911.

[5] *Ibid.*, Hardinge to Crewe, 22 February 1911.

To the Private Secretary to the King he pointed out that the reversal of the policy would be regarded in India as a concession to clamour, and it would be a severe blow to the loyal section of the Indian people.[6]

But hardly six months had elapsed when Hardinge changed his opinion. He writes, "it was brought home to me that if there was to be peace in the two Bengals it was absolutely necessary to do something to remove what was regarded by all Bengalis as an act of flagrant injustice without justification. If nothing was done we would have to be prepared for even more serious trouble in the future than in the past. It was Sir John Jenkins, the Home Member of my Council, who in a letter to me dated the 17th June 1911 sent me a memorandum which caused my views to materialise into a definite policy."[7]

In a despatch to the Secretary of State he strongly urged upon him two proposals which he regarded as interdependent. The first proposal was that in view of the inconvenient geographical situation of Calcutta, the undesirability of locating the capitals of the province and of India at the same place, and the requirements consequential upon the constitutional changes of the Act of 1909, it was necessary to remove the capital from Calcutta to a more central and more easily accessible place. Delhi with its past traditions seemed the most suitable city to serve as the capital of India.

But the transfer of the capital involved many other considerations, both immediate and prospective. The immediate consideration was to allay the bitterness of feeling engendered by the Partition of Bengal, which the removal of capital by itself might further exacerbate. In considering the modification of the arrangements of 1905 in order to satisfy the aspirations of the Bengalis, the convenience of administration and conciliation of Muslim sentiment had to be kept in view.

Hardinge proposed:

(1) to reunite the Bengali-speaking divisions under a Governor-in-Council,

(2) to create the Lieutenant-governorship-in-Council of Bihar, Orissa and Chhota Nagpur,

(3) to restore the Chief Commissionership of Assam,

(4) to make Delhi the future capital of India.

He expected that the reconstitution of Bengal would achieve two results—the political unrest would be alleviated, and the Hindu-Muslim tension would be relieved. The choice of the new capital at Delhi would ensure political advantages impossible to overestimate.

Crewe in reply to the despatch gave his general approval to the Governor-General's proposals. As the King was eager to receive the imperial crown in India, it was decided that the Delhi Durbar would be a suitable occasion for the announcement of the changes by the King-Emperor in person.[9]

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[6] *Ibid.*, Hardinge to Sir A. J. Bigge, 26 February 1911.

[7] Lord Hardinge, *My Indian Years*, 1910-16, pp. 36-40.

[8] Home Department Proceedings, Delhi A, December 1911, Nos. 8-11. Governor General to Secretary of State for India, 25th August 1911.

On December 12, 1911 the Coronation ceremony was held at Delhi and the transfer of the capital and reconstitution of the provinces was formally announced. The requisite Parliamentary legislation was enacted in 1912.

The effect of the act of restitution was temporary. For the time being public agitation became less clamorous. The Muslims did not show too much resentment. After all the new province of Bengal still had a Muslim majority though somewhat reduced.[10] Hardinge visited Dacca in January 1912 to see for himself how the Muslims had reacted to the annulment of the Partition. He wrote to the Governor of Bombay "there is no possible doubt that the modification of the Partition is intensely popular in Bengal....I think that they (the Muslims) are now entirely reassured and I left them perfectly happy and satisfied."[11]

The amelioration of political conditions, however, was only apparent for the measures announced with a fanfare of trumpets in the Delhi Durbar hardly touched the fringe of the deep-lying causes of the unrest. Nor did the fresh laws placing further restrictions on the Press which muzzled expression, remove the real grievance.

The Partition question was now out of the way, but the other and more fundamental problems remained. For evidently the course of secret violence could not be effectively controlled and ended by either the restoration of the unity of Bengal or by heavy-handed repression. The movement had spread widely and deeply, it was not merely a law and order matter, it required to be dealt with on the political plane as well.

III. THE LUCKNOW PACT

The Government's approach can only be understood by an analysis of the situation.

When the Act of 1909 came into operation the different political parties reacted in different ways. Some wanted to work the reforms for what they were worth, others rejected them.

The split in the Congress in 1907 was a sign of the change which was seeping into the field of politics. The violence and fury which marked

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[9] *Ibid.*, Crewe to Hardinge, 1 November 1911.

[10] The census of 1921 gives the following statistics :

	Hindus	*Muslims*
Bengal	20.2 m.	25.2 m.
Assam	4.1 m.	2.2 m.
Bihar, Orissa & Chhota Nagpur . . .	28.2 m.	3.7 m.

[11] *Hardinge Papers*, Governor General to the Governor of Bombay, No. 65, dated 1/2 February 1912.

the anti-partition agitation indicated that the old methods of mendicancy had lost their appeal and that the new school of political activists would have nothing to do with them. A similar development took place among the Muslims.

But if the rulers thought that the policy laid down by Morley and Minto could restore the conditions which existed before 1905, they were woefully mistaken. The pseudo-liberalism which inspired Morley's administrative arrangements, but did not involve real transfer of responsibility, dazzled for some time the eyes of the Indian Moderates. Under Morley's spell they excluded the Extremists from the Congress and for the next eight years maintained exclusive control over it.

When on the 17th December 1908, Morley introduced the Reforms Bill in the House of Lords, the Moderates led by Rash Behari Ghosh, Gokhale, Surendranath Banerjea, Pherozeshah Mehta and others foregathered at Madras in the Congress session, sang paeans of praise for the Bill and shouted hallelujahs for its author. On May 25, 1909, the Bill completed its long period of gestation and became law.

The Moderates had second thoughts when they saw it in the final shape with the Regulations made under it. Malaviya who presided at the Lahore session of the Congress in December 1909 damned it with faint praise, but bitterly attacked its provisions regarding Muslim representation and its obvious injustice to the Hindus.

The more they worked the Reforms the less satisfactory they appeared. Morley and Minto had presented Indians with a toy to play with, not a tool for effective use.

In 1909 the Congress deemed it its duty to place on record its strong sense of disapproval of the creation of separate electorates on the basis of religion; regretted the excessive and unfairly preponderant share of representation given to the Muslims; unjust, invidious and humiliating distinctions made between the Muslims and the non-Muslims in the matter of elections, the franchise and the qualifications of the candidates; and deplored the general distrust shown towards the educated classes.

It also drew attention to the defects in the constitution of the Provincial Councils.

Next year at Allahabad the criticism was reiterated, though in milder terms. The Congress President Wedderburn attempted to bring about conciliation between the Congress and the Muslim League, but without success.

In 1911 the Congress met at Calcutta with Bishan Narayan Dhar in the chair. The announcement of the modification of the Bengal Partition evoked the gratitude of the Congress. But the resolution about separate representation was repeated.

In the following year it demanded a revision of the Government of India Act of 1909, and deprecated the extension of the principle of separate communal electorates to the local bodies. A welcome feature of the Congress session of 1912 at Bankipore (Patna) was the large attendance of Muslims.

In 1913 the Congress placed on record its warm appreciation of the change in the objects of the Muslim League, and welcomed the proposal of the League to find a *modus operandi* for joint and concerted action on questions of national interest.

The succeeding year the Congress met after the outbreak of the first World War on August 4, 1914. It expressed its profound devotion to the Throne, its unswerving allegiance to the British connection, and its resolve to stand by the Empire, at all hazards and at all costs. It appealed to the Government that in view of the manifestation of loyalty by the people of India, the British Government should take such measures as may be necessary for the recognition of India as a component part of a federated Empire, in the full and free enjoyment of the rights belonging to that state.

Said Bhupendra Nath Basu, the President of the Congress session for the year : "The world is swinging onward on the uplifting ropes of time....The war of nations will knock off the vestiges of medieaval domination of one man over many, of one race over another, it is not possible to roll back the tide of wider life which is flowing....into the still waters of the East....India wants that her government should be consistent with her growing self-respect and intellectuality....India wants that her government should be an autonomous Government under the British Empire."[12]

The main obstacle in the way of constitutional advance apparently was the communal differences. Efforts had been set on foot at the Karachi session of the Congress in 1913 to bring the Muslim League and the Congress to an agreement on the political goal of India. The Bombay session, 1915, marked a notable advance towards this objective.

Satyendra Prasanna Sinha, the President of the year, told the audience, "the only satisfactory form of self-government to which India aspires cannot be anything short of what President Lincoln so pithily described as government of the people, for the people and by the people." He exhorted the British rulers in the following words: "Let it be realized that great as has been England's mission in the past, she has a far more glorious task to fulfil in the future in encouraging and guiding the political self-government of the people. The goal to which India may attain is still distant, but..India may be regarded as a true friend of the Empire and not merely as a trusty dependant..I appeal to the British nation to declare their ungrudging approval of the goal 'autonomy within the Empire' to which we aspire; such a declaration will be the most distinguished way of marking their appreciation of India's services and sacrifices."[13]

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[12] *Congress Presidential Addresses* (2nd edition, Second series, 1934), pp. 167-71. Natesan (1934)

Meanwhile the Muslims were shedding their old leadership and their policy of dependence upon the rulers. In 1913 they came under the liberal and dynamic influence of Jinnah and Muhammad Ali, and abandoning their old creed, accepted the goal of self-government for India suited to its conditions. The League decided to enter into negotiations with the Congress to formulate a scheme of the future government of India.

Other forces joined in these endeavours. The War had produced a new stir, which shook the West and the East. Mrs. Annie Besant who had till now devoted her energies to religion entered the field of politics. She started the weekly "*Commonweal*" in January 1914 and a few months later the daily "*New India*". With her characteristic zeal she threw herself into the maelstrom of the Indian struggle for independence.

At first she tried to unite the two factions of the Congress, but failed. Then in 1915 she published her plea for India's autonomy in her book entitled "*India a Nation*", which was followed by a series of articles on the history of the freedom movement under the caption "*How India Wrought for Freedom*". She laid the foundations of the Home Rule League.

About the same time Tilak who had been released in 1914 from the prison in Mandalay, started the Home Rule League in Poona.

Tilak, the responsivist cooperator, and Annie Besant, the radical politician, joined their forces to rouse the country out of the lethargy of the past decade.

In 1916, at Lucknow the Moderates and the Extremists as also the Home Rulers and the Muslim Leaguers came together, and unanimously adopted the agreement known as the Lucknow Pact. Its main proposals were:

(1) Special or separate electorates for the Muslims in the Provincial Councils in accordance with the following proportions:
Punjab 50 p.c., United Provinces 30 p.c., Bengal 40 p.c., Bihar 25 p.c., Central Provinces 15 p.c., Madras 15 p.c., Bombay 33-1/3 p.c.

(2) The Imperial Legislative Council should consist of altogether 150 members, of whom 120 should be non-officials and one-third of the elected members Muslims.

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[13] *Ibid.*, p. 200.

(3) No bill, nor any clause of a bill, nor a resolution introduced by a non-official member affecting one or the other community shall be proceeded with, if three-fourths of the members of the community, in the Provincial or Imperial Council oppose the bill, clause or resolution.

(4) Defence, foreign and political affairs—war, peace and treaties, were considered outside the powers of the Imperial Legislative Council.

The acceptance of separate electorates and the fixation of proportions of communal representatives by the Congress were important decisions which had considerable impact both on the affairs of the people and the plans of Government.

The Lucknow Pact was the basis of the resolution on self-government. With one voice the united Congress told the Government that "it is of opinion that the time has come when His Majesty the King-Emperor should be pleased to issue a proclamation announcing that it is the aim and intention of British policy to confer self-government on India at an early date."[14]

IV. Revolutionary Movement

Draconian laws against the press and public meetings were passed during Minto's regime and strengthened in the time of Hardinge. The Government liberally practised the Russian method of "packing off trainloads of suspects to Siberia", (Morley), and was helped by the easier economic conditions which set in after the famines of 1898-1900 and 1907-8. The result was that the fury of the agitation caused by the Partition of Bengal was abated. But the relative calm was only superficial.

What actually happened was that the movement changed its character. It went underground. The revolutionaries took to the pursuit of violent activities like bomb-throwing and dacoity. Outside the country revolutionary movements were organised in England, France, the United States of America, and when the first World War started they moved into Switzerland, Germany, Turkey and countries of the Middle East.[15]

The first phase of the terrorist movement in Bengal had come to an end with the close of the Maniktola Garden Case, which was tried in Alipore Jail. During the course of the trial two young accused killed the approver in the jail compound and were hanged. The leader of the group, Barindra Ghose, with others, was sentenced to transportation for life, and several others received various terms of imprisonment by the judgment of the Court on May 6, 1909.

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[14] *The Indian National Congress* (Natesan), 2nd edition, 1917, Part II, p. 180.

[15] Ker, J.C., *Political Trouble in India*, pp. 170-317.

The prosecution and punishment of these young men, however, had little effect on the secret revolutionary activity. Murders, dacoities and wrecking of railway trains continued. According to the statistics collected by the Rowlatt Committee in Bengal there were more than 60 cases of murder or attempts at murder and over 110 cases of dacoity and robbery between 1906 and 1917.

Among the other provinces, the Panjab and Maharashtra (parts of the Bombay Presidency and the Central Provinces) figured prominently in such acts. Bihar and Orissa, Uttar Pradesh (NWP and Oudh), Rajasthan and Madras were not as active. But there were a large number of conspiracies accompanied with violence and attempts at promoting rebellion in the army, specially in the Panjab after the War had broken out and the Sikhs from the USA and Europe had returned to India embittered by racial discrimination.

In Bengal *The Anushilan Samiti* continued to function till it was banned. But it spread its branches outside Bengal and numerous societies grew up in different provinces on its model. *The Abhinava Bharat* organised by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar played an important role in Maharashtra.

The societies collected arms and ammunition and also manufactured bombs and explosives. They collected funds for their activities by committing dacoities and plundering banks, treasuries, post offices and the rich.

The victims of these exploits were largely Indians whom the terrorists regarded as treacherous enemies of India-policemen, public prosecutors, approvers, informers, spies and others.

The plots to murder Englishmen were rarely successful. In October and December 1907 two attempts were made to blow up the train in which the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal was travelling, but both failed.

On April 30, 1908, Mrs. and Miss Kennedy were killed by a bomb thrown into their carriage in Muzaffarpore. Sir Andrew Fraser, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, was made the target of an attack on November 7, 1908. But he escaped unhurt.

In November 1909, when Lord Minto visited Ahmedabad two bombs were found on the track along which the Viceroy's carriage passed.

The Abhinava Bharat was responsible for the murder of Jackson, the District Magistrate of Nasik, who had committed Ganesh Savarkar, the brother of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, for trial, on 21st December 1909.

In Madras, Ashe, the District Magistrate of Tinnevelly was shot on the 17th June 1911.

On December 23, 1912, when Lord Hardinge made his formal entry into Delhi which had been made the capital of India, a bomb was thrown at the elephant on which he was riding in procession in Chandni Chowk, Delhi. The Viceroy suffered serious injuries, and an attendant was killed.

The terrorists believed that the rule of an alien power was destructive of Indian religon, morality and culture, and that the overthrow of that rule was essential for the spiritual revival of the motherland. According to them so long as British rule lasted the Indian people would be in a perpetual state of war with the rulers, and that in this war all means were justified, including the use of the revolver and the bomb against the enemies of freedom, whether British or Indian.

The terrorists calculated that by the assassination of individuals they would demoralize government servants and paralyse administration. But they had vague notions of what would follow. Some of them thought that on the fall of the British Government in India, an independent sovereign republic would be established. They were so involved in their immediate enterprise as not to have the time or inclination to figure out the future.

Opinions about the terrorists and their work differ widely. Some have classed them with anarchists and criminals and regarded them as enemies of society and state who only deserved to be destroyed root and branch. This is obviously a perverted judgement. There can be no doubt that however mistaken their views about the efficacy of their methods, they were inspired with a lofty idealism, and that in the pursuit of the independence of their country they were prepared to make the supreme sacrifice of their life and all. They were men and women of extraordinary daring. Some of them possessed amazing capacity for organisation and wonderful combination of skill and resource. Even their bitterest enemies recognised that they were moved by the spirit of patriotism and selfless sacrifice.

The direct political results of the movement cannot be considered striking. The method of assassination of individuals through secret conspiracy is by its nature futile and its aim of paralysing government impractical.

Yet the psychological effects of the drama of high adventure and bold defiance cannot be ignored. Each act of murder, dacoity or train derailment sent a thrill of excitement through the hearts of the people. Many approved the deed and sympathised with and admired the doer. Those who felt repelled by violence, marvelled at the fearless and reckless challenge to authority, whose might was never questioned before. The spread of such a spirit boded no good to the government which was founded on prestige and fear.

The terrorist movement in India concerned itself with secret conspiracy and individual action. But the Indian revolutionaries abroad though not averse to such methods, came to realize that the liberation of India was not attainable that way, and therefore they began to plan an armed rising in which soldiers and fire-arms would be employed.

In order to obtain the first the Indian troops had to be approached and their loyalty transferred from their British masters to the cause of their country's freedom. So far as the second was concerned, arms had to be procured by purchase from arms dealers from countries hostile to Britain and possibly by raiding armouries in the country or sending the advocates of armed revolution to pursue their plans in countries outside India.

They knew the history of the European revolutionaries and freedom fighters, for instance, that Mazzini had chosen to direct the Italian movement from England. The Russian revolutionaries operated from various European countries, including England. The fathers of communism, Marx and Engels spread their propaganda from London. England was, in fact, regarded as the refuge of all those at war against foreign or native oppressors. The Indian students or businessmen who resided in Europe came into contact with the rebels against their governments. The Indians of an earlier generation like Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendranath Banerjea, Aurobindo Ghose owed much of their elan for India's emancipation to the contacts abroad.

But the first organised attempt to establish a centre for training, propaganda and political action was made by Shyamji Krishna Varma, who had studied at Cambridge and who was called to the Bar in London. On return from England he served in several Indian states. The bitter experience of British Residents in the states turned his mind and he began to dream of India's deliverance from British oppression. He returned to England in 1897 and established the Home Rule Society in 1905. He then opened a centre for study and propaganda in London, called the India House. Here many students gathered to listen to lectures on the pitiable conditions prevailing in India and the methods of mending or ending them. A monthly journal—*The Indian Sociologist*, was also issued, and fellowships were awarded to students.

The centre attracted many young men residing at different universities in England. Two of them were outstanding among them, namely, Har Dayal and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar. Another youth belonging to the centre was Madanlal Dhingra.

The teachings of Shyamji Krishna Varma laid emphasis upon peaceful civil resistance, which anticipated some of the programmes of Gandhiji, but he did not disapprove of violence.

Savarkar arrived in England in 1906. He had started his political career under the inspiration of Tilak and he and his elder brother Ganesh had organised a society which was later transformed into *The Abhinava Bharat Society* on the model of *The Anusilan Samiti* of Bengal.

Vinayak Savarkar became the leading spirit in the India House of London. In fact, he took charge of the House when Shyamji Krishna Varma left for Paris. The activities of the House consisted in issuing pamphlets advocating the methods of Russian revolutionaries, celebrating the anniversary of the Revolt of 1857, and expounding the policy of assassination and use of bombs. Savarkar read chapters of his book on the Indian war of Independence, 1857, at the meetings. In 1909, Madanlal Dhingra shot Curzon-Wyllie, political A.D.C. at the India Office. Savarkar was soon after arrested and sent for trial to India. He was sentenced to penal servitude and imprisoned in the Andamans till 1921 when he was brought back to India and kept in Alipore jail. Later he was permitted to return to Ratnagiri on condition that he refrained from political activities. The ban was lifted in 1937.

Har Dayal who was one of the most brilliant alumni of the Panjab University, won the state scholarship in 1905 and proceeded to England. He joined the Oxford University. Soon after he came under the influence of Shyamji Krishna Varma. Although possessed of extraordinary qualities of mind he was highly emotional, ascetical, dedicated, intense; for him the adoption of a rule of life implied its immediate translation into action and conduct. As soon as he came to the conclusion that the rule of the British over India was immoral, he determined to sever all relations with Government. He resigned his scholarship and came back to India in 1907.

In the meanwhile the British Government on receiving information regarding the activities of the India House began to take steps to suppress them. Shyamji Krishna Varma had already left England and with Madam Cama, and S.S. Rana established the headquarters of the movement in Paris. The terrorists of India effected a liaison with them. They sent their members to France to learn the art of preparing explosives and to procure weapons and smuggle them into India.

Har Dayal whose activities in India had made him a dangerous person in the eyes of Government was advised to leave the country. He went to France and after some months' stay left for the USA. On the way he stopped at Martinique and then arrived on the western coast of America. There he found the Indian emigrants, mostly Sikhs, very much agitated. Prejudices due to colour differences, jealousies due to labour rivalries, and disparities of manners, customs and ways of living created humiliating and hostile conditions. The British Government, of which they were subjects, took no interest in them, and gave them no help. They formed their societies, but their leadership was feeble.

In these conditions Har Dayal arrived in their midst. He put a new life in the Hindu (Indian) Association and renamed it *Ghadr* rebellion.

He founded the Yugantar Ashram, collected funds and set up a vigorous agitation. A paper also called *Ghadr* was started and it was circulated not only in America but also in other lands wherever there were Indians, as well as in India.

The Ghadr Party came into existence on November 1, 1913. It was violently anti-British. It supported all countries hostile to Britain, and appealed to the Americans in the name of liberty and equality to support Indians fighting to throw off the British yoke. The society attracted the sympathy of some Americans, but the British were annoyed and alarmed, especially because the society expressed pro-German sentiments and even invited the German Consul to the meeting in December 1913, and seated him on the dais.

On the complaint of the British representative Har Dayal was arrested on March 24, 1914 and proceedings were begun against him under the Immigration Law. He jumped security, left America and came to Geneva in Switzerland.

Quite a number of Indians collected there. Among them Shyamji Krishna Varma, Virendra Chattopadhyaya (brother of Sarojini Naidu), Tarak Nath Das, Champak Raman Pillai, Chandra H. Chakravarti, Barakatullah and others.

When the war broke out some of them including Har Dayal, transferred their activities to Germany and sought the aid of the German Government in the liberation of India. The German foreign office in its keenness to threaten the British empire in the East, encouraged them with money and other facilities, including arms. The Indian revolutionaries organised the Indian Independence Committee in Berlin. The Committee planned schemes to do propaganda in USA, India, the Near East and other countries, to recruit troops and ambulance units of Indians in Europe to fight the British and render help to Germans in disseminating anti-British propaganda, to incite rebellion among the troops in India, to train experts in explosives, to induce the Indian prisoners of war to renounce British allegiance, to lift arms to India, and to do all that was necessary to bring about the downfall of the British Empire.

In 1915 Har Dayal went to Constantinople where he met Enver Pasha. About this time the Muslim leaders in India led by Mahmud-al Hasan of Deoband, were actively engaged in gaining the support of the Muslim countries for the Indian struggle. A number of Panjabi Muslim youth escaped to the north western frontier to work among the tribes. Obaidullah Sindhi was sent to Kabul where he tried to win over the Amir of Afghanistan. Mahmud al Hasan and Husain Ahmad Madni went to Arabia and met the Turkish officers there—Ghalib and Enver Pasha. Silk letters were secretly distributed in India and outside. From Berlin Mahendra Pratap and Barakatullah arrived in Kabul with some German officers. They founded a government of India in exile with Mahendra Pratap as the President of the Republic, Barakatullah as Prime Minister, and other Indians in charge of other high appointments.

But the plans of the revolutionaries in Kabul and Mecca proved infructuous. Obaidullah had to leave Kabul and Mahmud al Hasan and his companions were handed over to the British who kept them as prisoners in Malta for the duration of the war. The disasters which befell the German arms scattered the Indian revolutionaries. Har Dayal left Germany and took shelter in Sweden.

The Germans made great efforts to export large quantities of weapons to India from the USA, by way of Honolulu, Shanghai, Batavia, Singapore, the Andaman Islands to ports in Orissa—Rai Mangal, Balasore and Hatia. But none of them succeeded. The alertness of the British navy and the ineptitude of the Germans were responsible for their failure. After the war conditions for foreign intervention completely disappeared, and although the Ghadr Party continued to exist for a few years, it eventually subsided into extinction.

An offshoot of the revolutionary activities abroad was the *Komagata Maru* case. The facts were that a number of Sikhs from India travelled by a Japanese ship—*Komagata Maru*, to enter British Columbia in western Canada. The Canadian authorities refused them permission to land and the ship had to return. The ship reached Budge Budge near Calcutta, on the 29th September, 1914.

Arrangements were made to despatch them by a special train which excited the suspicion of the men. Most of them refused to entrain and marched towards Calcutta. The police tried to stop them but they refused. Troops and more police were sent for and it appeared to the Sikhs that force would be used against them. Their leader Baba Gurdit Singh was approached by a sergeant of the European police with intention to coerce him. The men closed round the leader. Then shooting started. Night fell but by the next morning rest of the Sikhs were apprehended and despatched by train to the Panjab. This was a case of suspicion on the part of the Government that the party was the nucleus of a most dangerous revolutionary movement. On the other hand the Sikhs were embittered by the treatment which they received both from Canadian and Indian authorities and were provoked to violence.

V. Government's Anti-revolutionary Measures

The activities of the revolutionaries at home and abroad naturally perturbed the Government. Special arrangements were made to watch and report manifestations of disloyal and seditious activity, to disinter and quell conspiracies and to squelch manifestation of anti-government tendencies. From the first incidents, deliberations on the causes of the phenomenon and remedies for its removal were started.

Reginald Craddock, the Home Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, wrote on April 27, 1913, a very elaborate minute explaining why the movement originated in Bengal and acquired such luxuriant growth there.[16]

He pointed out that the terrorists were very largely drawn from the higher caste Bengalis, the *Bhadralok*. He asked who were the *Bhadralok* and answered that they were not exclusively or even largely an urban class as in other provinces. They were spread over the whole of rural Bengal, and in certain localities their members were so numerous as to constitute a very large element in rural society. They were mostly middle men between the Zamindars and ryots. They were an educated class, who received the smattering of knowledge in the numerous schools and colleges scattered over the countryside and in the towns.

These middlemen were a product of the peculiar system of permanent land settlement in Bengal. They collected rents from the cultivators and passed them on to the landlords through a hierarchy of middlemen or agents. Each rung in the ladder appropriated its own share of perquisites, thus reducing the sum considerably before it reached the owner. Their families were the recruiting field for professions—lawyer, teacher, journalist, revenue collector, clerk. Their economic conditions were modest, many of them just made two ends meet. Hence they provided a fertile field for recruitment to the forces of political agitation. In Craddock's words : "Here, then, has been the raw material created upon which discontent and seditious preaching are able to have full play."

According to Craddock's analysis the two main causes of the spread of discontent and disloyalty were—(a) inadequacy of administration, and (2) economic distress.

So far as the first was concerned he found the village administration was of the weakest. There were no village officers connected with land as in the other provinces and the only governmental agency was the police, all others were concentrated at headquarters of districts and sub-divisions, of enormous size. Then the Zamindari system had created a class of landlords who had no functions except to receive rents through a band of middlemen who were inadequately recompensed. The idle zamindars had no responsibility or authority to maintain peace and order in the village they owned.

So far as the second cause was concerned he maintained that "economic discontent with their lot is the root cause of all this sedition and anarchy." The discontent was aggravated by "the tyranny of the zamindar, the tyranny of the vakil and the press, and also the tyranny of the moneylender supported by the law courts.....Everyone of these influences has become more powerful than the beneficent influence of Government, which is negatively manifested only by the so-called tyranny of the Police."

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[16] Home Department, Political A Proceedings, May 1913, Nos. 72-75.

In a letter to Crewe regarding revolutionary activities Hardinge wrote on March 9, 1915 "the situation in Bengal is decidedly bad and is deteriorating....Now taking the situation in Bengal with that prevailing in the Panjab, and the almost certainty in my opinion that attempts have been made to tamper with our native troops, I think the best course to pursue would be to pass an ordinance on the lines of the Act for the Defence of the Realm."[17]

About the Panjab, Lajpat Rai's testimony is: "read in the light of past events, of what has been happening in the north-west districts of Punjab for the last ten years, of what happened in 1907, 1910, 1913 and 1914 and comparing all this with the loyalty of the Punjab in the seventies and eighties, one who knows the province well, cannot but conclude that the Punjab, the recruiting ground of the British Indian army, is seething with discontent. And what is true of the Punjab is more or less true of the rest of India."[18]

The conclusion of the Government was that the situation was intolerable and that a deep-seated conspiracy existed the object of which was to paralyse the administration.[19]

Both the Government of India and that of Bengal were determined to crush anti-governmental activities. Laws were made harsher—the Criminal Procedure Code was amended, surveillance and security proceedings were carried out on a large scale, more stringent measures were contemplated and Regulation III of 1818 was used freely.

To suppress this revolutionary movement in Bengal alone a hundred persons were made state prisoners under the Regulation III of 1818, and seven hundred were detained under the Defence of India Act. These figures refer to the early months of 1917. The Governor of Bengal believed "there is every possibility of those figures showing a steady increase."[20]

The clear analysis by Craddock shows that some at least among the higher echelon of the bureaucracy were percipient enough to recognise that the problem was not merely one of law and order. The malady was deeper and needed a political solution. They were able to diagnose correctly the deep-seated canker which was eating into the vitals of the people and exposing them to moral danger, but they bungled in finding the right remedy. They wanted to treat the symptoms without attacking the inner disease.

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[17] *Hardinge Papers*, Hardinge to Crewe, March 9, 1915.

[18] Joshi, V.C. (Ed.), *Lala Lajpat Rai, Writings and Speeches*, Vol. I pp. 227-28.

[19] Home Department Politicai Proceedings No. 3 of 1914. Governor-General in Council to the Secretary of State, 26 March 1914.

[20] *Chamberlain Papers* (Microfilm copy, National Archives); Ronaldshay to Chamberlain, 27 June, 1917.

VI. HOME RULE AGITATION

The nibbling tactics of the Moderates and the earth-shaking strategy of the Revolutionaries had their uses. One eroded the moral foundations of imperialism, the other destroyed the great illusion of the unchallengeability of British power. In 1914 however the national movement was at a low ebb. The Moderate politicians had lost their appeal to the public; the extremist leaders were scattered to the four winds; some like Tilak were withering in jails; others like Bipin Chandra Pal and Lajpat Rai had gone into self-imposed exile and were keeping up the fight from their distant bases in England and USA. But the work of the Extremist leaders had not been in vain. During the anti-partition days the Indian people, especially the younger generation had been stirred to its depths and their outlook had been changed from one of mendicancy to militancy. This generation had heard the rousing speeches of their leaders, had read the denunciation of British rule in *Bande Mataram* and the *Kesari*, had taken part in processions and picketing, had cheerfully borne brutal police attacks and imprisonments, and had thus shown its willingness to suffer and sacrifice for the national cause. Besides the old seats of politics like Bengal, Panjab and Maharashtra, new regions like U.P., Bihar, Orissa, Madras, Gujarat were throwing up young men with shining idealism who were thirsting for action. They looked for stout-hearted leaders who would lead them into battle. Annie Besant who entered politics in 1914 and Tilak who was released from jail in the middle of the year, were the answer to their prayers.

Mrs. Annie Besant, now sixty-seven, was an unusual woman of great eloquence and with a commanding personality. After the disruption of her unhappy marriage in 1867, she directed her fierce energies to all radical causes. The desire to spread liberty and true thought among men, to make the world freer and better than she found it, all this impelled her, she said, with a force that would not be denied. She associated with Bradlaugh in his campaign of free thought and worked on the staff of his paper the *National Reformer*. In 1884 she became interested in the work of the Fabian Society and toiled hard in its behalf with such giants as Sidney Webb, G.B. Shaw and Graham Wallas to spread ideas of socialist economics. In 1886 she added spiritualism to her studies. The two volumes of the *Secret Doctrine* by Madame Blavatsky won her to Theosophy. She joined the Society in 1889 and in 1893 came to India to deliver her spiritual message. From this time onward, she lived in India and contributed much to education and Hindu revival by lecturing, by founding schools and by translating Hindu texts into English. As Rajagopalachari says, "she helped young India to feel sure of the greatness of Indian culture and religion."

Till 1914 Mrs. Besant had devoted all her energies to religion, education and social reform, which she now transferred to the political field. According to her own confession "increasing repression, narrowing of liberty, the ill-treatment of students and the danger of revolution forced her into the field."[21] She started the *Commonweal* in 1914 and the daily *New India* in August 1914 "to press forward the coming changes in India and to claim steadily India's place in the Empire."[22]

She had already lectured in England on such subjects as "England's need is India's opportunity", "The price of India's loyalty is India's freedom", "Strike the metal when the iron is hot," etc. In her papers she developed the theme of self-government for India and declared she would lead a campaign for the attainment of Swaraj. "The fate of the British Empire," she said, "hangs on the fate of India and therefore it is but wisdom and prudence to keep India contented by granting Home Rule to her."[23]

As the Congress had become a listless body she tried to infuse fresh enthusiasm in it. She saw that without the return of the Extremists to the Congress fold, this was not possible.

In 1914 December she initiated negotiations with Tilak to persuade him to rejoin the Congress. Tilak was keen to be back in the Congress fold, but he made it clear, that for the Moderates' method of association with government and mild criticism of its acts, he would "substitute the method of opposition to Government, pure and simple, within constitutional limits—in other words, a policy of Irish obstruction."

The deaths of Gokhale and Pherozeshah Mehta in 1915 facilitated Tilak's entry into Congress. He not only subscribed to Home Rule ideology but raised the banner of the movement on his own in his home province and rallied his followers to the cause.

At a joint meeting of the Committees of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League at Calcutta Annie Besant exercised her influence successfully to bring about accommodation between the two bodies on the question of communal representation. This common decision was the precursor of the Pact which was signed at Lucknow and which was the basis of the resolution on self-government passed at the Congress in 1916 and which in its turn influenced the decision of Montagu on reforms.

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[21] *New India*, 4 April 1917, p. 2.

[22] Home Deptt. Political Proceedings (Confidential), September 1916, Nos. 652-55.

[23] Annie Besant, *Builder of India*, pp. 75-84.

With the adoption of the Home Rule League objective of self-government on the model of the government of the Dominions a great stimulus was given to the movement. This strengthened Mrs. Besant's hands, and she started a hurricane campaign in support of the early realisation of the object of the Home Rule League.

She became the President of the League and Arundale the Organising Secretary, C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar one of the General Secretaries and B.P. Wadia the treasurer. Two hundred branches of the League sprouted all over India. Through the Home Rule page in *Young India* Annie Besant advised the branches about the work to be done. The members were to set up classes to lecture on political subjects; establish libraries where the public could read literature on politics; pamphlets on political issues were to be prepared and circulated; League members were to undertake social work in their areas, participate in municipal activities and organise public meetings and lectures to keep the objectives of Home Rule before the public eye. About 26 pamphlets were issued in English and some in local languages. They criticised the machinery of Government of India and demanded self-government. Mrs. Besant herself made a whirlwind tour all over the country delivering lectures in Calcutta, Lucknow, Allahabad and other small and big towns. She was critical of the foreign policy of the Government, of its policy in regard to home charges, of its method of recruitment, of its neglect of industries, and education and of its land revenue policy. In her weekly *Commonweal* and especially in the daily *New India* she wrote column after column upholding India's claims to Swaraj.

Efforts were made to revive the Swadeshi movement and to organise educational institutions on national lines.

Reginald Craddock wrote: "The position is one of great difficulty. The Moderate leaders can command no support among the vocal classes who are being led at the heels of Tilak and Besant. Home Rule is pressed....as the only salvation from innumerable wrongs and grievances under which India is suffering.....Under cover of constitutional agitation, the minds of the people who read newspapers are being poisoned against the British Government."[24]

This activity alarmed the Government and on June 16, 1917 Mrs. Besant and her two lieutenants were served by Pentland, the Governor of Madras, with the order of internment. There was angry uproar against the order. The resentment was universal and provincial leaders of all schools like Motilal Nehru, Tej Bahadur Sapru, C.R. Das, C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar, M.A. Jinnah, Bhulabhai Desai, M.R. Jayakar and others joined the Home Rule League to spite the Government.

The Home Rule League's advocacy won adherents. The Mahaaja of Bikaner expressed the sympathy of "the princes for 'the legitimate aspirations of our brother Indians".[25] The Aga Khan privately gested to the British Government that India should be suitably rewarded for her war services.[26]

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[24] Quoted by Kanji Dwarkadas, *India's Fight for Freedom*, p. 35.

Jinnah strongly protested against the internment of Mrs. Besant. He said as President of the Bombay branch of the Home Rule League that it was "an attempt to intern the Home Rule or self-government scheme framed and adopted conjointly by the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League at Lucknow"[27].

Gandhiji wrote privately to Chelmsford, "in my humble opinion the internments are a big blunder"[28]. Dr. Sapru in paying a glowing tribute to Mrs. Besant said "In 1915 she conceived the idea of Home Rule for India. There was general unrest in the country. We were talking of reforms, and expansion of Councils, and swore by Swaraj but our ideas were nebulous. Her clear thinking gave concrete shape to our undefined and indefinite ideas, resulting in an organised movement for Home Rule for India."[29]

When on 20th August 1917 Montagu made his declaration in Parliament, the internment lost all its meaning, even if it possessed any before. Mrs. Besant was released on September 17, 1917. Her popularity had risen to the highest pitch. She was elected almost unanimously as the president of the next Congress convened at Calcutta. In her address she declared her faith in these words:

"To see India free, to see her hold up her head among the nations, to see her sons and daughters respected everywhere, to see her worthy of her mighty past, engaged in building a yet mightier Future—is not this worth working for, worth suffering for, worth living and dying for?"[30]

By the unexampled loftiness of her speech, by her amazing capability for organisation and by the singular power of her dynamic personality she succeeded in making self-government the central and immediate objective of India's politics. She had the good fortune to receive the fullest cooperation in her undertaking from an equally forceful and determined person, namely, Tilak.

Tilak after return from Mandalay immediately started to prepare his plan of action to revive the nationalist movement. People who had shown little interest in the Congress politics were ready to answer his call and to follow his lead.

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[25] Panikkar, K.M., *H.H. The Maharaja of Bikaner, a Biography*, p. 174.

[26] Kanji Dwarkadas, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

[27] Hector Bolitho, *Jinnah*, pp. 67-68.

[28] Kanji Dwarkadas, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

[30] *Congress Presidential Addresses* (Second Series, 1911-1934) Natesan, (1934) p. 377.

The Bombay Provincial Conference which met in Poona on May 8, 1915 demonstrated by the number of attendance and enthusiasm of its proceedings how strong his hold was on the affections of the people of Maharashtra. At the Conference he exhorted the delegates to make the demand for immediate swaraj or Home Rule. Tilak realised that for the success of the struggle it was necessary to carry the Congress with him. The door to admission into the national organisation had been opened at Bombay in the session of 1915. Tilak at once took upon himself the task of convincing the sceptical Extremists that it was necessary to shed old prejudices and join the Congress.

At the meeting of the Provincial Conference at Belgaum in 1916 the question was settled and Tilak's advice was adopted.

Next he moved to organise the forces which had been scattered after the Surat split. A new political association under the name of Home Rule League was set up immediately after the Belgaum Conference. Tilak undertook a whirlwind campaign in order to popularise it. The two Leagues—the one of Tilak and the other of Mrs. Besant, pooled their work and carried forward a vigorous propaganda. Mrs. Besant came to Poona and addressed a meeting under the chairmanship of Tilak.

The Government frowned upon his activities and served on him a demand of Rs. 40,000 as surety for good behaviour. Tilak appealed to the High Court and the order of demand was set aside. Then orders were given under the Defence of India Act prohibiting his entry into the Panjab and Delhi provinces. The more the Government displayed its displeasure the greater the popularity of Tilak grew among his countrymen. In 1916 he had become the idol of the people.

In December 1915 the Congress had lifted the ban on the entry of the Extremists. Tilak took the fullest advantage of this change at the 1916 session. He took with him 300 delegates by a special train from Bombay to Lucknow to attend the Congress. All along the journey the party received the most rousing welcome at every station. At Lucknow thousands crowded the station demonstrating their admiration and reverence for the great leader. The Congress accorded him an unprecedented ovation.

He exercised his tremendous influence in persuading the delegates to accept the terms of the agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League. To the charge that he had yielded too much to the Muslims his reply was, "I am sure I express the feelings of the Hindu community all over India when I say we could not have yielded too much. I would not care if the rights of self-government are granted to the Muhammedan community or any other section of the Indian community. The fight then will be between them and the other sections of the Indian community and not, as at present, a triangular fight"[31].

But for Tilak's powerful advocacy and undisputed leadership among the nationalist delegates, it is doubtful if the Lucknow Pact could have been approved. It was a great personal triumph that he persuaded the Congress to accept the unpopular demand for separate representation for the Muslims and the proportion of the Hindu and Muslim representatives in the Central and Provincial legislatures.

The united Congress and the Muslim League passed resolutions to the effect that the time had come when the King Emperor should be pleased to issue a proclamation announcing that it was the aim and intention of British policy to confer self-government on India at an early date.

VII. Official Attitude to Political Advance

Since the Surat split in 1907, the Moderates had dominated the Congress, and the Nationalists or the left-wing also known as the Extremists had been in a minority. The party led by Pherozeshah Mehta, Gokhale and Banerjea still entertained the hope of securing the fulfilment of its aspirations through the generosity and sense of justice of the British people, though it was growing more and more critical and more and more insistent.

As if in response to the challenge came the publication in December 1911 of the Hardinge dispatch of August 25, 1911 which started a hot discussion concerning India's future. The passage which caused the uproar read as follows :

"In the course of time, the just demands of Indians for a larger share in the Government of the country will have to be satisfied and the question will be how this devolution of power can be conceded without impairing the supreme authority of the Governor General in Council. The only possible solution of the difficulty would appear to be gradually to give the provinces a larger measure of self-government, until at last India would consist of a number of administrations autonomous in all provincial affairs, with the Government of India above them all."[32]

The Indian Moderates seized upon this statement as a promise of provincial autonomy and began to press for its fulfilment.

The more advanced party, namely the Extremists, had lost its faith in the good intentions of the rulers. Its leaders were suspected and repressive laws were applied to them in full force. But the Extremists refused to be frightened or subdued. B.C. Pal had drawn up and published a scheme of Swaraj short of which India would not be satisfied. Lajpat Rai explained India's demand in these words :

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[31] Tahmankar, D.V., *Lokamanya Tilak*, p. 248.

[32] Home Department Proceedings, Delhi A, December 1911, Nos. 8-11. From the Governor General in Council to the Secretary of State for India, 25 August 1911.

"We want political power in order to raise the intellectual and politica status of our masses. ... Our goal is real liberty, equality and opportunity for all. ... We want freedom to legislate and freedom to determine our fiscal arrangements. That is our main purpose in our demand for Home Rule."[33]

Meanwhile the Muslim League had undergone a change. In 1913, it had adopted responsible government for India as its objective and started to seek cooperation with the Congress.

But in February 1912, Curzon and Lansdowne in the House of Lords raised an alarm. They charged the Government with the intention of introducing some sort of federal home rule in India.[34] Crewe stated the policy of the Liberal Government and assured the House that it had no such intention.[35]

Hardly a week had elapsed however when Montagu, the Under Secretary of State for India, addressing his constituency of Cambridge on February 28, remarked : "That statement (Hardinge's) shows the goal, the aim towards which we propose to work on. We cannot drift on for ever without stating a policy. A new generation, a new school of thought, fostered by our education and new European learning has grown up, and it asks : 'What are you going to do with us.' "[36].

Bonar Law in the House of Commons drew attention on 2nd April to the discrepancy between the statement of Crewe in the House of Lords and Montagu's speech at Cambridge. Inchcape asked for a statement of the views of His Majesty's Government. Crewe explained the objects of British policy in India. Regarding India's demand for self-government on the Dominions model he asserted, "I repeat categorically what I said last time, that there is nothing whatever in the teachings of history so far as I know them, or in the present condition of the world so far as I understand them, which makes the realisation of such a dream even remotely possible."[37] Even more bluntly than Morley his liberal successor had dismissed the Indian claim for dominion status as a world as remote as Atlantis or Erewhon.

In India the Despatch was a subject of discussion among the members of the Executive Council of the Viceroy. Craddock the Home Member wrote a lengthy note in which he maintained that India was not a nation nor could she achieve nationhood within any conceivable stretch of time, for to be a national state a people must fulfil two conditions, namely, (1) the complete obliteration of racial and religious animosities by the unification of the various races, the abolition of caste, and the conversion of the vast majority of the population to a single form of religion; and (2) the overwhelming predominance either of the adherents of one religion or of one of the great Indian native states, over all the rest of the country.

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[33] Joshi, V.C. (ed.), *Lala Lajpat Rai: Writings and Speeches*, Vol. I, 1888-1919, p. 345.

[34] *House of Lords Debates*, 5th series, Vol. 12, February 1912, cols. 143-46.

[35] *Ibid.*, cols. 155-6.

[36] Montagu, E.S., *Speeches on Indian Questions.*, pp. 258-59.

[37] *House of Lords Debates*, 5th series, Vol. 12, 29 July 1912, cols. 744-45.

As neither of these conditions were likely to be satisfied for centuries, self-government was out of the question.[38]

Provincial self-government which implied transfer of power over provincial administration to Indians was equally so a dream and not a practicable ideal. For if this autonomy was conceded it would lead to one of the two alternatives, either resort to force by the Central Government to assert its supremacy or abdication.

Craddock's solution ruled out the demand for self-government. But it sought to establish good government—"progress in health, wealth and intelligence, and progress in the recognition of merit and ability in Indians." His advice to every true patriot was to accept "the well-ordered march of progress under the leadership of British guides", and to forget all about self-government. If England took 800 years to evolve the democratic system of government, why should India be in a hurry to accomplish a similar journey in a shorter time. He strongly maintained that there could be no goal and no promised land for India's political journey.

Craddock's memorandum is a revelation of the Indian official mind.

Hardinge noted on Craddock's minute that he had inserted the paragraph in his despatch from the memorandum of Sir John Jenkins, dated June 24, 1911, in order to vindicate the future policy of the Government of India. According to him this policy implied :

(1) the principle of decentralisation,
(2) an increase in the number of Indians employed in the administration, and
(3) the permanency of British rule in India.

He expressly stated, "colonial self-government on the lines of the British Dominions is absolutely out of the question."[39]

Ali Imam, the then Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, dotted the i's and crossed the t's of Hardinge's statement. He pompously observed : "India's future is a matter of evolution and not the growth of a hot-house plant which is to be forced or stinted in accordance with the pleasure of the horticulturist."[40]

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[38] Home Department Political (Deposit) Proceedings, September 1912. Subject : Considerations arising from the interpretation of paragraph 3 of the Government of India Despatch dated August 25, 1911, Minute of R. Craddock, dated 6 July 1912.

[39] *Ibid.*

[40] *Ibid.*

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* ruefully confessed that Crewe had knocked autonomy on the head. But Surendranath Banerjea was not dismayed. He insisted, "Lord Macaulay foretold it. Lord Metcalfe wished it. Elphinstone and Munro described it as the aim of British rule in India.' Hope sprang eternal in the Moderates' breast.

VIII. The Great War and Its Impact

The Great World War which broke out in August 1914 worked as a catalyst to the Indian national movement. It accelerated its pace and defined its objectives in clear terms.

The war was the result of economic rivalries and competition for colonial expansion between the European powers. Germany's rapid industrial development and growth of armed strength threatened the naval and political supremacy of England. It was clear that the rivalry between the two groups would lead to a mighty conflagration.

Britain was most vitally interested in bringing about the defeat of the German arms and was anxious to deploy all the resources of the Empire against the enemy. It naturally wanted that India should make as great a contribution to the war effort as possible. India could do this if its people, on the one hand enthusiastically supported Britain and, on the other hand, refrained from carrying on anti-British activities and thus relieved the Government of its anxieties and enabled it to devote all the man power and material means for the prosecution of the war.

The first object to the utter surprise of the British rulers, was amply realised. There swelled a wave of loyal sentiment all over India. In 1914, the Congress at Madras resolved "to convey to His Majesty the King-Emperor and the people of England its profound devotion to the Throne, its unswerving allegiance to the British connection, and its firm resolve to stand by the Empire at all hazards and at all costs."[41]

Tilak the pre-eminent leader of the Extremists, and regarded by the Government as the inveterate enemy of British rule, declared "at such a crisis it is the duty of every Indian, be he great or small, rich or poor, to support and assist His Majesty's Government to the best of his ability."[42]

Gandhiji became a self-appointed recruiting sergeant for the army.

The Muslims were unhappy at the attitude of the Western powers, especially Britain, towards Turkey. But the Muslim troops fought zealously for the empire against the Turks in Gallipoli and Mesopotamia, and demonstrated how little hold the religious leaders—Maulavis and Mullahs, had on their mind.

The other sections of society—the princes, landlords, merchants and non-political classes, vied with the politicians in joining the chorus of loyalty. It is true that in different communities, interests and classes the motivation was different, differing from genuine traditional reverrence for the ruling authority or *Sarkar*, to expectation of communal reward or national gain. This pro-British stance was in many ways helpful in the prosecution of the war. It gave the Government confidence in denuding India of both British and Indian troops and sending them to the front. It aided the effort to raise from India a large contribution in men, money and material. It guaranteed the failure of German plans in support of the revolutionary movement.

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[41] *The Indian National Congress* (2nd edition, Natesan & Co.), Part II, p. 165.

[42] Tahmankar, D.V., *op. cit.*, p. 210.

India despatched a considerable number of troops to France immediately on the declaration of the war to hold up the German advance till the British and colonial armies were trained and equipped, and took over the operations. Later, expeditions were fitted out from India to East Africa, Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia. Altogether 1,200,000 Indians were recruited during the war period and about the same number sent overseas with military equipment; ten per cent of these became casualties.[43]

As the war dragged on, India became a vital supply base for vast quantities of small arms and ammunitions, clothing and food supplies to allied armies in the Middle East.

India's war effort surprised the British people and the British statesmen. Prime Minister Asquith acknowledged that "in all the moving exhibitions of national and imperial patriotism which the war had evoked, there was none which had more touched the feelings of the British people than the magnificent response which the princes and the peoples of India had made to their need."[44]

Charles Roberts, Under Secretary of State for India, speaking in the House of Commons on 26 November, 1914, described it as "this striking and historic event—the participation of India in force in the World War of the Empire."[45] He added, "but it is clear that India claims to be not a mere dependent but a partner in the Empire, and her partnership with us in spirit and on battlefields cannot but alter the angle from which we shall all henceforward look at the problems of the government of India,"[46] and he hoped that "the common endeavours of these days would enable India to realise that she was occupying, and was destined to occupy a place in our free Empire worthy of her fighting races, and the patriotism of her sons."[47]

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[43] For India's war effort see *India In 1917-18*, pp. 5-20, and the presidential speech of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, 1918, *Congress Presidential Addresses* Natesan, 1934), Second Series, pp. 380-1.

[44] *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, 5th Series, Vol. 66, col. 955.

[45] *Ibid.*, Vol. 68, col. 1357.

[46] *Ibid.*

[47] *Ibid.*, col. 1358.

As India's aspirations rose, the generous mood of England ebbed and the old ways of thinking about India resumed their sway.

A dangerous development was the appearance of a new concept of Empire, in which the white Dominions would not only enjoy complete autonomy in all their affairs, but would share in governing the other parts of the empire. India would thus be placed under the subjection of the Dominions.

Indians themselves came to realise what an asset their country was to the empire and felt a sense of pride that Indian sepoys were fighting shoulder to shoulder with British soldiers. The myth of the invincibility of the British arms and the superiority of the white man was exploded. Ideas of equality of races and partnership in a free empire began to be entertained as practical issues. Even such strong Moderates as Bhupendra Nath Basu and Sinha put forward pleas for declaring self-government as the goal of India's progress. Mrs. Besant and Tilak stumped the country with the demand for Home Rule. British politicians could no longer postpone decision on the Indian problem.

IX. Declaration of August 1917

Austen Chamberlain who succeeded Crewe as the Secretary of State for India in the new coalition government was conscious of the need. He asked Hardinge who had been in India since 1910 to send him a memorandum on the reforms which in his opinion ought to be introduced in the Government of India after the war. The memorandum was submitted in October 1915. Hardinge's view might be guessed from his farewell speech to the Imperial Legislative Council on March 24, 1916. He said: "I do not for a moment wish to discountenance self-government as a national idea. It is a perfectly legitimate aspiration and has the warm sympathy of all moderate men."[48]

Chamberlain suggested to the British Cabinet that practical steps should be taken to meet the "powerful and increasing demand for a greater share by Indians in the administration of the country." But the intended changes "would not be in the nature of rewards for services rendered by India in the war", but would be granted because "on general gounds we felt that the time for a further advance had arrived."[49]

Chelmsford who took over from Hardinge on 4th April, 1916 was very different from his three predecessors—Curzon, Minto and Hardinge. He shared Curzon's ideas of imperialism but lacked his talents, he had neither the shrewdness and pertinacity of Minto nor the suavity, dignity and sympathy of Hardinge. Montagu wrote about him, "he is really a good fellow, thoroughly nice, but unfortunately cold, aloof and reserved"[50]. With Chelmsford in mind he exclaimed, "the sort of men we seek to make a Viceroy is wholly wrong....They approach their problem from the wrong side: they do the work they are called upon to do; they wade through files; they think of their regulations......Political instinct they have none."[51]

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[48] Budget session of the Imperial Legislative Council, see *Speeches of Lord Hardinge* (Ganesh & Co.), p. 551.

[49] *Chamberlain Papers*, Minute of War Cabinet, No. 23 3/172 of June 1917, on Indian Reforms.

Chelmsford in his turn wrote a despatch to Chamberlain on 24 November, 1916, in which he explained his opinions concerning "questions of great moment arising out of the part played by India in the present supreme crisis of the empire, and the recognition which is her just due for the ungrudging services that she has rendered, and the steadfast loyalty which she has displayed."[52]

After describing the situation in India, the despatch sets out the proposals of the Government of India. The goal of British rule is defined in these terms:

"To associate them (Indians) with ourselves into a continuously increasing degree in the administration of the country."

This was explained by the Viceroy in a letter to all governors and chief commissioners on July 20, 1916 as follows:[53]

"The goal to which we look forward is the endowment of British India as an integral part of the Empire with Self-Government, but the rate of progress towards that goal must depend upon the improvement and wide diffusion of education, the softening of racial and religious differences, and the acquisition of political experience."

And then in order to reach the goal it proposed the following lines of advance:

(1) measures designed to remove existing grievances;
(2) The early advance towards the goal in the domains of urban and rural self-government;
(3) Larger employment of Indians in the higher ranks of administration;
(4) general political progress.[54]

For the last item three possible lines of advance were mentioned:

(i) the rearrangement of the existing constituencies and broadening of the franchise;
(ii) an increase in the proportion of elected members or that the Councils should contain an elected majority; and
(iii) an expansion of the constitutional powers of the Councils

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[50] Waley, S.D., *Edwin Montagu, a Memoir*, p. 144.

[51] *Ibid.*

[52] Home Department, Political A, Proceedings, December 1916. No. 17 Letter dated November 24, 1916.

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] *Ibid.*

The Government of India took care to point out, "we have no wish to develop the Councils as quasi-parliament. Nor are we prepared at present to give them anything in the nature of direct financial or administrative control."[55]

As to the controversial question of separate electorates the despatch noted a difference of opinion among the members. Some advocated the adoption of territorial constituencies, others the retention of class and interest electorates or a combination of both systems.

Austen Chamberlain appointed an India Office Committee to examine the proposals of the Viceroy which submitted its report on March 18, 1917.. The Committee turned down most of the recommendations relating to increase in the number of members of the Councils, and regarding the goal expressed the opinion:

"We doubt the wisdom of dangling before the Indian politicians a formula of political progress, hedged with restrictions that nullify its meaning, and calculated to embarrass, by the vagueness of its promises, our successors in Indian government. We feel that the situation demands not the visionary prospect of a development beyond the realization of generations, but a frank and clear statement embodying practical progressive reforms capable of achievement within a definite future that can be foreseen."[56]

Chamberlain agreed with much of this criticism, but explained that his personal difficulty was "that it makes no real progress towards Self-Government."[57] Chamberlain was inclined to say "that our object is to develop free institutions with a view to ultimate Self-Government within the Empire."[58]

Others shared Chamberlain's views. Meston, the Lt.-Governor of the N.W. Provinces (Uttar Pradesh), who had attended the combined deliberations of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League at Lucknow in December 1916, wrote a note to the Viceroy on February 7, 1917 in which he stated:

"It is a great national occasion. National pride would be deeply stirred, and national susceptibilities would be enormously soothed if a Royal Proclaimation were to announce the acceptance of self-government for India within the Empire as the goal of our policy."[59]

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[55] *Ibid.*

[56] *Chamberlain Papers*, Report on Government of India Despatch, dated November 24, 1916.

[57] *Chamberlain Papers :* Austen Chamberlain to Chelmsford, May 15, 1917.

[58] *Ibid.*

[59] *Ibid.*, J.S. Meston's note for the Viceroy.

Again in a note on constitutional reforms Meston wrote on May 21, 1917, "There is, I take it, no question that our business in India is to go in for ultimate self-government."[60]

Meston was a member of a group which called itself the Round Table It issued in 1916 "suggestions for constitutional progress in Indian Polity." It suggested how transfer of power could be effected in a limited sector of administration without disturbing the structure of the Government at the centre. This was the famous plan of 'dyarchy' which was later embodied in the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms.

Support came from another quarter. In March 1917 the Imperial War Conference and the Imperial War Cabinet held their sittings in London. India was represented on them by Secretary of State Chamberlain, James Meston, S. P. Sinha and Maharaja of Bikaner. The Indian Members took the opportunity to plead India's case before the British audience. Bikaner wrote a minute on May 15, 1917 foreseeing serious consequences if substantial concessions were not made and advising that the aim of the British policy in India should be declared with special solemnity.

He observed, "those of us who have also the best interests of the British Government at heart, find it difficult to meet the allegation that the British Government never grants any political concessions until at the eleventh hour agitation and public clamour force their hands, and that what is given is given with a bad grace and not in a generous or sympathetic spirit."[61]

However, before Chamberlain could take any definite action on the suggestions emanating from very responsible sources, he became a casualty of the war. The British forces suffered a reverse in Mesopotamia. The Euphrates advance was checked by the Turks and the British troops were besieged in Kut al Amara whose relief was unsuccessful. An enquiry Commission was appointed to fix the responsibility for the failure. Its report came up before the Parliament. Montagu censured the Government of India in slashing terms on July 12. He said, "The Government of India is too wooden, too iron, tooin elastic, too antediluvian to be of any use for the modern purposes we have in view."[62] "The history of this war shows," Montagu went on, "that you can rely on the loyalty of the Indian people to the Empire. If you want to use that loyalty you must take advantage of that love of country which is a religion in India, you must give them that bigger opportunity of controlling their destinies by growing control of the executive itself."[63]

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[60] *Ibid.*

[61] *Ibid.*, Ganga Singh, Maharajah of Bikaner, 15 May 1917.

[62] *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, 5th Series, Vol. 195, col. 2205.

[63] *Ibid.*, cols. 2209-10.

The future of India he envisioned in these terms: "I see the great self-governing Dominions and Provinces of India organised and coordinated with the great Principalities—not one great Home Rule country, but a series of self-governing Provinces and Principalities, federated by One Central Government."[64]

The attack went home. Chamberlain resigned. Lloyd George immediately offered the post to Montagu who accepted the offer. In the letter to the Prime Minister he reiterated that his policy as Minister would be based on two principles:

"(1) An immediate *exploration* of the system of governing India at home and in India with a view to devising greater elasticity and greater efficiency, and

(2) A statement that the ultimate end we have in view for the Indian Empire is a series of self-governing Provinces united to one another and to the Principalities by one Central Government, together with some instalment of the policy as a start."[65]

Montagu assumed charge of office on July 20, 1917. The immediate task before him was to take a decision on the important questions on which Chamberlain had initiated discussion. He had the statements of the officials before him. Both Hardinge and Chelmsford had submitted their opinions to the Secretary of State. The officials had expressed their views. Some were in favour of defining the goal and announcing the steps by which it ought to be reached. Others regarded it "hazardous undertaking to forecast the future." The Indian opinion almost unanimously demanded a real and substantial devolution of power or home rule. The political situation as presented by India and the world and the conditions created by the fluctuations and vagaries of the war were vividly present to his mind.

The choice before him was a narrow one. The Indian alternative of immediate grant of self-government was rejected out of hand by all British politicians and public men. While some of them were prepared to admit that the time had come for a move forward, others held, India was not fit for home rule nor would be ready for self-government within a predictable period of time. But the difference between the two was really small, that between 'never' and 'the Greek Kalends.'

The question then was whether it was expedient to make a beginning with the transfer of a tiny measure of power in matters of secondary importance keeping the overall control of the Government of India intact, as an experiment and a test, with an examination at the end of ten years to determine the next advance.

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[64] *Ibid.*

[65] Waley, S.D., *op. cit.*, p. 131.

Or, to maintain the irresponsible character of government indefinitely, not to hold forth vain prospects of parliamentary self-government, but to remove some of the glaring defects and anomalies which experience had revealed, to increase the number of elected members of the Councils and to appoint more Indians to higher posts.

Montagu had made up his mind already, he had deliberately opted for the first alternative knowing that he was not yielding to the claims of the Indian nationalists—extremists or moderates. A declaration had to be made and he had to obtain the imprimatur of the Cabinet for his policy. The difficulty was that his admired hero, Asquith, had left the Cabinet and the successor—Lloyd George, was not well disposed. And Curzon, an important member of the Cabinet, was neither friendly towards him personally nor sympathetic towards Indian aspirations. But with the invaluable support of Chamberlain and by yielding on details while holding on to the main objective, Montagu ultimately won his point. The importunities of Chelmsford in favour of an early decision influenced Curzon and Balfour to expedite the consideration of the Indian problem.

On August 14, 1917, the Cabinet at last considered the question and approved the words and phrases of the announcement which Montagu had to make. There was some debate on the phrase "self-government" which Curzon disapproved. In its place "responsible government" was chosen.

On August 20, the anxiously awaited announcement was made:

"The policy of H.M. Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire."

X. MONTAGU-CHELMSFORD REFORMS

The main point had been won, the next task was to find a formula for a government administered by an alien agency but partly responsible to the people of the country itself; in other words to combine an autocratic and irresponsible executive with self-governing institutions. Montagu had come to the conclusion that the formula must contain an element of delegated authority, however limited. Therefore he came to India. His main purpose was cajoling, persuading, accommodating the doubting Thomases—among the official and non-official Englishmen, and nationalist Indians, whom he regarded as irresponsible visionaries.

He set about his task with great earnestness as his Diary testifies—frenzied activity, interminable interviews, prolonged parleys, altogether a wearisome experience. But he bore it all with admirable patience and, on the whole, with good cheer in spite of the interludes of depression. The report bearing the names of Montagu and Chelmsford was produced with commendable expedition, but in fact it was largely Montagu's work. So far as Chelmsford was concerned Montagu felt, "I really find myself despairing of this man. He is faced with the greatest issues of his life... I have sent him new suggestion after new suggestion, and I find that the ten days has produced no corresponding thought of any kind from him. ..I have got to go on alone."[66] His conclusion was "I have kept India quiet for six months at a critical period of the war."[67]

On April 21, 1918 the report was finished, and another major task had been accomplished. The next formidable step was to persuade the Cabinet to accept responsibility for the report. Here again the main hurdle was Curzon who was approached by the British die-hards to raise objections of all sorts—to the principles and to the details. Curzon believed that his responsibility about India was overwhelming because no scheme could pass the House of Lords which was not endorsed by him, and he looked upon the provisions of the report so revolutionary as to threaten the ultimate disruption of the Empire.

Ultimately Montagu secured the permission of the Cabinet to publish the report, which was carried into effect on July 8, 1918. The Indian reaction was hostile. Tilak regarded the Montagu scheme as "entirely unacceptable." Mrs. Besant denounced it, "the scheme is unworthy of England to offer and unworthy of India to accept."

A special session of the Congress held at Bombay opened on August 27, 1918, under the chairmanship of Hasan Imam. The delegates numbering 3,845 were not of one mind regarding the attitude towards the scheme of reforms, as there was general distrust of British intentions. The part which the Round Table Group was playing in the affair increased their doubts. Montagu's too obvious efforts to secure the approval of the Moderates like Surendranath Banerjea, Setalvad, Chandavarkar, Rahmatullah, his suggestions to them to organise propaganda in favour of the report with the assistance of the Government, and sundry other matters had deepened the suspicions of the nationalists. It is not surprising that the Congress while recognising that some proposals in the Report constituted an advance in some directions, declared that the scheme as a whole was "disappointing and unsatisfactory."

The Muslim League met at the same time under the presidentship of the Raja of Mahmudabad and adopted a resolution on practically the same lines as those of the Congress.

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[66] *Ibid.*, p. 152.

[67] *Ibid.*

In December 1918 at the Delhi session of the Congress, the resolution passed at the special session was reaffirmed, and the following clause was added:

"This Congress is of opinion that so far as the provinces are concerned full Responsible Government should be granted at once, and that no part of British India should be excluded from the benefits of the proposed constitutional reforms."

The addition was due to the reaction against the attitude of the Moderates who had now separated from the Congress and aligned themselves with the Government. The Congress also demanded the establishment, at an early date, of complete responsible government in India, and equality of status with the Dominions.

The Home Rule Leagues of Mrs. Besant and Tilak made efforts to send their deputations to England to explain the nationalist point of view and to counteract the propaganda of the opponents of reforms, as the proposals were soon to be debated in Parliament.

The Moderates led by Banerjea seceded from the Congress for they differed from the Extremists in principle. Banerjea moved a resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council recognising the reforms as a genuine effort and a definite advance towards the progressive realisation of responsible government in India. They also held a meeting at Bombay on November 1, 1918, with Surendranath Banerjea in the chair. They welcomed the proposals and considered them as a real and substantial step towards responsible government, but recommended modifications in them.

Montagu's Reform Scheme passed through the scrutiny of various committees. One committee considered the problem of franchise, a second that of the division of functions between the centre and the provinces and between reserved and transferred subjects in the provinces. A third committee considered the reorganisation of the India Office.

The reports of the Committees together with the views of the Government of India, and the suggestions received from others, were placed before Parliament when the bill was introduced in July 1919. The Parliament referred the bill and the reports to the Joint Select Committee of the two Houses. The recommendations of the Joint Committee were debated in the two Houses of Parliament and on December 23, 1919, the bill was finally placed on the Statute Book under the title—Government of India Act, 1919.

Curiously, in spite of the studious avoidance of the term self-government in the Act, the speakers in the Parliamentary debate on Montagu's bill did refer to the future status of India as one of a Dominion. The Instrument of Instructions issued later to the Governor-General described the end of the progressive realisation of responsible government to be "that British India may attain its due place among the Dominions."

The appointment of two Indians—Bikaner and Sinha, to attend the Imperial War Conference and the Imperial War Cabinet in 1917 suggested the same status. India was admitted to the Imperial Conference on an equal footing with the self-governing Dominions.

Yet in subsequent years the position tacitly accepted under the stimulus of war, was repudiated. But, though England might go back on this as on other previous pledges, India would not abandon the ideal of self-government, within the Empire if possible, without if necessary.

The Act made a few minor changes in the highest rung of the constitutional ladder—the powers and functions of the Parliament in relation to India and the position of the Secretary of State in Council. The salary of the Secretary of State was transferred from the Indian to the British Exchequer. At the next level so far as the Government of India was concerned, several modifications were made. The constitution of the central legislature was altered. Instead of a single chamber, two houses were created—a lower house to be called the Legislative Assembly and an upper house to be known as the Council of State.

The strength of the two bodies, and the number of official and non-official, elected and nominated members, were fixed by Regulations The Assembly consisted of 103 elected and 42 nominated members The Central Government continued to be wholly autocratic.

The legislature could discuss and vote upon all proposals including financial proposals, but the Governor-General was authorized to disregard the vote of the Legislature if he considered it essential to do so in the discharge of his responsibilities. In regard to other matters too he could either withhold his assent or return them to the legislature for reconsideration. So far as transferred subjects in the provinces were concerned, the power of superintendence, direction and control over local governments, vested in the Governor-General in Council, could be exercised only for specific purposes mentioned in the rules.

But for the introduction of a bicameral legislature, the enlargement of its size and the alteration in its composition, no vital political change was effected at the centre.

But in the sphere of provincial governments a new principle was introduced. In the first place, a greater degree of autonomy was conceded to the provincial governments. Then the subjects entrusted to the provinces were differentiated from the central subjects and they were divided into two parts—"reserved" and "transferred".

The manner of dealing with the two lists was provided by special arrangements in the legislature and the executive. Thus what is known as the dyarchic system of government was established.

The provincial councils were to consist of three kinds of members—ex-officio members of the Executive Council of the Governor, nominated and elected. Their numbers were to be fixed by regulation, but not more than 20 per cent could be officials and at least 70 per cent had to be elected. The qualifications, method of election, number of members elected by communal electorates and other related matters were also to be prescribed by rules.

The Legislative Councils were invested with powers to make laws for the peace and good government of the territories constituting the Provinces.

But their legislative and financial competence was limited e.g., in money matters demands relating to reserved subjects and certain heads of expenditure like the salaries of the judges of the High Court and the members of the services appointed by the Secretary of State, could not be withheld. In all other matters the Governor had the discretion to certify that they affected the safety or tranquillity of the province and to prohibit their consideration. The Governor had also the power to withhold his assent to a measure passed by the legislature or to return the bill for reconsideration, or to reserve it for the consideration of the Governor General.

In regard to reserved subjects if the Governor certified that the passage of the bill was essential, then the bill would be deemed to have been passed whether the legislature considered it or not.

For the administration of the province an executive council was provided. It was to be composed of two parts—members for the reserved subjects, and ministers for the transferred subjects. The members were appointed by the Governor and were responsible to him. The ministers were chosen by the Governor from among the elected members of the Council to whom they were responsible. In relation to transferred subjects the Governor was to be guided by the advice of the ministers.

The effect of the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1919, was to transfer control—except in an emergency so declared by the Governor—over a number of provincial subjects to the legislatures in which the elected representatives of the people predominated. The list of transferred subjects consisted of mainly two kinds of subjects (1) public welfare, and (2) economic development. The first comprised education, sanitation and public health, local self-government; the second agriculture, industrial development, cooperative societies, forests, fisheries, etc. The basic governmental function—law and order or police, magistracy, judiciary, finance and control over income and expenditure, though of fundamental importance to the welfare and progress of the province were outside the purview of the ministers.

The subjects dealing with economic development were transferred but in isolation from matters which constituted the pre-condition of development—e.g. supply of capital, tariff, transport, etc. With limited and inelastic sources of income it was not possible to make much progress in the welfare subjects.

The intention of the framers of the Act appeared to have been to provide a training school for politicians and to test the ability of Indians to profit by this training in the use of parliamentary methods of government rather than to confide the welfare of the people into their own hands.

Reaction of Political Parties

The reaction of the political parties naturally was one of disappointment and dissatisfaction. But they were not yet prepared to break with the rulers. The Congress in 1918 (August) demanded transfer of some power at the centre and of most powers—except law and order, in the provinces. In December 1918, too, the demand was for the status of the self-governing Dominions. Even at Amritsar in December 1919 after all the tragic events of the year, a resolution of loyalty to the Emperor and of satisfaction on successful termination of the War was passed. The demand for responsible government as an integral part of the British Empire was reiterated, and it was resolved to work the reforms.

The Moderates, who had broken away from the Congress after the publication of the Montagu-Chelmsford report, in order to strengthen the hands of Montagu against the extremists of the right and of the left, formed a new organisation. They welcomed the reforms, extended to them hearty support and pronounced them "as constituting a real and substantial step towards the progressive realisation of responsible government." But they too suggested modifications and improvements not substantially different from those of the Congress. At their Calcutta Conference in December 1919, the President, Sivaswami Aiyer rejected the concepts of 'progressive realisation' and 'apprenticeship of one or two decades'. He regretted that the Government had not accepted the introduction of dyarchy at the centre and exclaimed, "I trust that from this day India will be described as a Dominion and not a Dependency of the Empire."

Apparently there was not much difference in the objectives of the Congress and the Liberal Federation. But "the differences of temperament, of outlook upon life, of policy between the two sections emerged into prominence increasingly day by day."[68]

The Muslims were in such a perturbed condition as a result of the defeat and dismemberment of Turkey that they were hardly in a mood to consider the reforms seriously. But the conservative section amongst them, in spite of the retention of the separate electorates, was frightened by the general trend of the scheme, and therefore put forward the demand for 50 per cent membership in all Councils.

The view of the Indian bureaucracy was expressed by Harcourt Butler, the Lieutenant Governor of the United Provinces (Uttar Pradesh). He informed Chamberlain, "the Montford reforms scheme has got very few friends left. Practically all the local governments have condemned it. . . .What we all feel as practical administrators is that the dyarchical arrangement is absolutely and inevitably bound to fail."[69]

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[68] Chintamani, C.Y., *Indian Politics Since the Mutiny*, p. 94.

Although the Congress had accepted the separate communal electorates by the Lucknow Pact of 1916, and failed to realize its sinister consequences, the Act of 1919 by embodying them in the Indian constitution confirmed the evil initiated by Morley and Minto. Very soon this poison spread rapidly in the body politic and led to woeful results for both the communities of India. It is of melancholy interest to record the views of Lionel Curtis one of the founders of the Round Table and the author of the concept of dyarchy, which he gave to the Viceroy and the Secretary of State on this subject. After inditing a devastating criticism of the "show" political reforms of Morley and Minto and delivering a smashing attack on the arguments of those who opposed the transfer of responsibility on one excuse or another—lack of education and experience and existence of communal and other differences—he examines the problem of separate representation and writes:

". . . Communal representation as I understand it means that Hindus and Moslems are to vote in separate constituencies, in such manner that a Moslem voter must vote for a Moslem candidate. He may not vote for one of any other religion: and the same applies to any other community to which communal representation is accorded. Moslems will thus learn to depend on an artificial protection, instead of facing the real source of their weakness, their relative backwardness in education. It is like keeping in irons a weak but healthy limb, which only needs exercise to recover its strength.

"The concession of this principle when electoral institutions were inaugurated a few years ago, is the greatest blunder ever committed by the British Government in India. I believe that, if this principle is perpetuated, we shall have saddled India with a new system of caste which will eat every year more deeply into her life. So long as it remains, India will never attain to the unity of nationhood. The longer it remains, the more difficult will it be to uproot, till in the end it will only be eradicated at the cost of civil war. To enable India to achieve nationhood, is the trust laid on us; and in conceding the establishment of communal representation we have, I hold, been false to that trust.

"The system has eaten into the life of this people so deeply that, already, it is not possible to abolish at one stroke what might have been refused a few years ago. But I feel that we shall be guilty of an unpardonable crime against India if we fail now to make provision whereby these fetters, in which we have allowed her to bind herself, can be loosened."[70]

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[69] *Chamberlain Papers :* Harcourt Butler to Chamberlain, 12 February 1919.

[70] Curtis Lionel *: Letters to the People of India on Responsible Government,* Calcutta (1917), pp. 111-12.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE NON-COOPERATION AND KHILAFAT MOVEMENTS

1. THE ROWLATT ACTS

When the India Act of 1919 was passing through the various stages of parliamentary procedure, the World War had ended. Both England and India were confronted with a new situation and new problems. In England new social forces had emerged and new problems insisted upon solution. In the Empire the question of the relation of the Dominions with England had acquired urgency. Abroad the making of peace with the Central Powers was proving almost harder than the winning of war. In India the Montagu report had created dismay and alarm in the bureaucracy. The days of unrestricted power and untrammelled action seemed to be threatened. The future was enveloped in boding darkness. Uncertainty was a strain on tempers. Fears were exaggerated and hostility towards the nationalists, whose clamour had compelled India's distant masters to yield, exacerbated.

In 1916 the Lucknow Pact had greatly strengthened India's case for constitutional advance. When in April 1917 Wilson led the USA into war and declared the war aims, Indian leaders were greatly encouraged. India's unexpected and enthusiastic support of the war and enormous sacrifices seemed to be about to prove fruitful.

But the Government of India in spite of the benevolent intentions of Chamberlain and the liberal declarations of Montagu, and in spite of their recognition of the need of action in response to India's claims, had little sympathy with Indian aspirations. While the Secretary of State was drawing up his report on the grant of responsible government, the Viceroy's Council was drafting measures to curb political activities. Although the Government had armed itself with drastic repressive powers and for the duration of the war possessed the weapon of the Defence of India Act, which it had not hesitated to use liberally, it felt the need of something which would take its place when the Act ceased to operate after the war.

Ronaldshay wrote to Chamberlain a letter in which after giving the statistics of those dealt with under the various Acts and regulations he expressed the opinion, "there is every possibility of these figures showing a steady increase", and added, "you will see therefore that the situation with which we are likely to be confronted at the end of the war is much more formidable than anything that was contemplated last year."[1]

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[1] *Chamberlain Papers :* Ronaldshay to Chamberlain, 27 June 1917.

The Secretary of State in a statement before the House of Commons on May 22, 1919, confessed "the position is not satisfactory. . . .Rebellion and revolution have appeared internally." Then he went on to analyse the causes. Among them the economic causes were very considerable. The factors which produced sufferings were many—failure of rains, diminution of food supplies, great rise of prices, loss by many families of their bread-winners as a result of recruitment for the army specially in the Panjab, and the consequent diminution of area under cultivation, influenza which caused loss of life—between 5 to 6 million, and the illness of on the average of two-thirds of the population which affected both industry and agriculture.

There was also the perturbation and perplexity among the Muslims, and the fear of the whittling down of the reforms as a result of the ceaseless activities of the Indo-British Association.[2]

Montagu's analysis was correct so far as it went. But neither he nor the Government duly recognised the importance of the psychological aspects of the Indian discontent and unrest. For the fact is that India's trust in Britain had reached a very low ebb by 1919. And an equally important fact was that the diminution of Indian faith was a rebound against the British lack of faith in India.

There were two factors which were agitating the Indian mind. One was the effect of external events, the aggression of European powers against Muslim countries, and the treatment of Indians by the whites in the Dominions. The other was the hostile attitude of the Government of India towards the Indian demand for self-government.

The first largely affected the Indian Muslim community who were naturally interested in the fate of the peoples of the same faith. This sympathy was a prominent element in the Muslim unrest and is dealt with in the chapter on the Muslim problem.

As regards the treatment of Indians in the Dominions the struggle against the South African Government so nobly led by Gandhiji had stirred all India.

The attitude of the Government of India and the British non-official community had greatly hardened against the more radical section of the Congress since the Partition of Bengal. The Government tended to identify the Extremists with the terrorists. But stern coercive measures instead of curbing the terrorists had the effect of sending them underground inside India and promoting armed intervention from abroad.

The revolutionary plans and the individual acts of terrorism against the British and Indian officers were made an excuse by the Governments of the provinces like Bengal and Panjab for pressing the Government of India to prepare laws which would take the place of the Defence of

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[2] Montagu, E.S., Speech in the House of Commons, 22 May 1919, *House of Commons Debates*, Vol. 116, Col. 328ff.

India Act after the war had ended. The Secretary to the Government of Bengal wrote to the Government of India:

"His Excellency in Council has carefully considered the nature of the legislation, which in addition to measures proceeding on remedial lines, will, he believed, be required after the end of the war, and has come to the conclusion that it ought to follow the main principles of the Defence of India Act and the Rules under it."[3]

The assessment of the Government was "our enemies within the gates are proportionately very few and that the miserable failure of the efforts that they have made against us is the surest testimony to the staunchness of the people at large,"[4] and though they knew—as pointed out by Montagu, that much of the restlessness was due to economic distress and conditions created by the war, they went forward with the approval of the Secretary of State with their proposal about the new legislation.

On December 10, 1917, the Government appointed a committee "to investigate and report on the nature and extent of criminal conspiracies connected with the revolutionary movement in India and to advise as to the legislation necessary to deal effectively with them." Rowlatt, a Judge of the High Court of Justice in England, was appointed the president, two judges of the High Courts in India—one Englishman and the other an Indian, and two non-officials—one Englishman and one Indian, were made members of the Committee.

The Committee met in camera from January 1918 and submitted its report on April 25. The report was based exclusively upon the evidence submitted by the Government of India and the governments of the provinces. Their conclusion was that "in Bombay the revolutionary movement was confined mostly to Chitpavan Brahmins. In Bengal the conspirators were youngmen belonging to the educated middle class, who committed a long series of murders and robberies."[5] In the Panjab, the outrages were largely due to the emigrants who returned from abroad. In the other provinces of India the movement had not taken root.[6]

The statistics about the deeds of violence committed in Bengal (East and West) from January 1906 to December 1917 yielded a figure of 311 outrages; 1,038 persons were accused but only 84 were convicted.[7]

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[3] Government of Bengal, Political Department, From the Hon'ble Mr. J.H. Kerr, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Secretary, Government of India, 17th February 1916.

[4] Home Department Political A, Proceedings No. 358 of December 1916; Governor-General to the Secretary of State for India, 24 November 1916.

[5] *Sedition Committee Report* (1918), p. 180.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *India In 1917-18*, P/. 158.

The Committee noted that the terrorist conspiracies had been circumvented by the wartime legislation, but they were not sure that they would not be revived. On the supposition of their recrudescence they suggested two kinds of measures—punitive and preventive.

On the basis of the report the Government of India prepared two bills for the Legislative Council. The object was to dispense with as much of the ordinary procedure for the trial of a person accused of crime as possible and to secure a speedy conviction. A special court from whose judgement there could be no appeal, trial in camera and consideration of evidence not admissible by the law of evidence, were provided for this purpose. Extraordinary powers of search, arrest, demand of security, etc. were conferred on the provincial governments. Indians felt that on the eve of the grant of a measure of self-government for India and after the splendid contribution made towards the war, such repressive measures were wholly uncalled for. But in spite of the protests from almost all sides the Assembly passed the bill into law which came into operation from March 21, 1919.

The passage of the brutal measure inevitably evoked opposition and condemnation. Even Sankaran Nair, a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, did not agree with certain parts of the law. In his dissenting minute he wrote:

"It means, in effect, that a person may be deprived of his liberty and his freedom of speech; and that the freedom of press is dependent upon the will of the executive government. Briefly the discretion of the bureaucrat is substituted for the ordinary laws of the country."[8]

During the debate in the Assembly the elected Indian members belonging to different parties and interests condemned the bill. Srinivasa Sastri the liberal leader observed, "the possession in the hands of the executive of power of this drastic nature will not hurt only the wicked. It will hurt the good as well as the bad, and there will be such a lowering of public spirit, there will be such a lowering of the political tone in the country, that all your talk of responsible government will be mere mockery."[9]. He ended his speech with these words, "if our appeal falls flat, if the Bill goes through, I do not believe there is any one here who would be doing his duty if he did not join the agitation."[10]

Jinnah, the Chairman of the Muslim League, warned the Government in his speech in the Assembly, "I do not wish to state it by way of threat or intimidation to Government, but I wish to state it because it is my duty to tell you that, if these measures are passed, you will create in the country from one end to the other a discontent and agitation, the like of which you have not witnessed, and it will have, believe me, a most disastrous effect on the good relations that have existed between the Government and people."[11]

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[8] Home Department, 1919, Political A Proceedings, January 1919, Nos. 45—72 & Appx & K.W., Minute of C. Sankaran Nair, 11 November 1918.

[9] Srinivasa Sastri—Legislative Assembly debate on the Rowlatt Bill, 7 February 1919.

[10] *Ibid.*

The Bill was put to vote. Twenty-two Indian members voted for its rejection, thirty-five official members voted for adoption. The only Indian in favour was Sankaran Nair, Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council.

After the passage, Jinnah, Malaviya and Mazhar ul Haq tendered their resignations from the Assembly. In his letter of resignation to the Viceroy, Jinnah stated :

"The Government of India and Your Excellency have thought it fit to place on the Statute Book a measure admittedly obnoxious and decidedly coercive at a time of peace and thereby substituted the Executive for the Judicial. Besides, by passing this Bill Your Excellency's government have actively negatived every argument they advanced but a year ago, when they appealed to India for help at the War Conference and ruthlessly trampled upon the principles for which Great Britain avowedly fought the war.

"The fundamental principles of Justice have been uprooted and the constitutional rights of the people have been violated at a time when there is no real danger to the state....

"In my opinion a Government that passes or sanctions such a lawt in times of peace forfeits its claim to be called a Civilized Government."[12]

Outside the Assembly the Indian Press was unanimous in expressing its strongest disapproval. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Calcutta) called it a "gigantic blunder which would arouse the worst passions of a peaceful law-abiding people."[13] The *New India* (Madras) described it as "monstrous".[14] The *Panjabee* (Lahore) regarded it "a bare-faced attemp on the part of a bureaucracy which has been demoralised by the exercise of unrestrained power to interfere with liberty."[15] *The Hindu* (Madras) wrote, "the Indian public would read the proposed provisions with shame, indignation and disgust."[16] The *Bombay Chronicle* (Bombay) treated it as "repression in excelsis."[17]

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[11] M.A. Jinnah, Legislative Assembly Debate on the Rowlatt Bill, 7 February 1919.

[12] *Montagu Papers* M.A. Jinnah to Chelmsford, dated 28 March 1919.

[13] *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 13 January 1919.

[14] *New India*, 18 January 1919.

[15] *Panjabee*, 21 January 1919.

[16] *The Hindu*, 22 January 1919.

[17] *Bombay Chronicle*, 25 January 1919.

While the opposition to the Act was countrywide, conditions in the Panjab were explosive for many reasons. Pressure had been used to recruit soldiers for war —300,000 combatants and 60,000 non-combatants, and many villages were shorn of labouring and earning men. Agrarian distress had led to restlessness and outrages which had been crushed with a heavy hand. Many Panjabi emigrants had returned to their homes with bitter feelings against the Government, which used the provisions of the Ingress Ordinance to prosecute them.

Lajpat Rai discussing the revolutionary activity in the Panjab concluded, "But after all has been said, we must reiterate that the underlying causes were economic and were the direct result of Government policy."[18]

II. GANDHIJI'S LEADERSHIP

Gandhiji had returned to India early in 1915 from South Africa where he had led an extraordinary movement of the Indian settlers for the vindication of their national honour and human rights. The experiences of this non-violent, ethically guided struggle had moulded the contours of his philosophy. The central principle which governed his thought and action, as explained earlier, was that man was in essence divine and the whole purpose of life was to realize his divinity in conduct, individual and collective. Religion, philosophy, ethics, social science, economics, politics—theory and practice, all must contribute to this one supreme purpose—self-realization. According to Gandhiji the reality of the purpose is expressed in two words—truth and non-violence. Truth is the core of individuality, man's identity with the highest and the innermost being. Non-violence is the basic principle of the human community, that which binds men into unity.

He judged all institutions and all strivings for progress in the light of these ideas. Independence of the country was necessary, for without individual liberty secured through a self-governing state, the necessary conditions for substantiating truth and non-violence could not be created. Thus Gandhiji's primary interest was in the transformation of man into a moral being, in overcoming what he had inherited through evolution from his natural ancestry by the principle which transcended nature.

This was the religion which he translated into practice in South Africa and which he endeavoured to propagate in India—in moral, social, economic and political life. His advent into Indian politics was the opening of a new chapter in its history.

He arrived in India in January 1915, after an absence of nearly quarter of a century with short infrequent visits to the country. He followed the advice of Gokhale to spend one quiet year to familiarize himself with the actual conditions of the country. He established a Satyagraha Ashram on the Sabarmati river near Ahmedabad. His first venture in the political field was in aid of the immediate abolition of the evil indenture system of recruiting labourers for the British colonies. The system was given up.

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[18] Lajpat Rai, *The Political Future of India*, p 274.

Then he turned his attention to the grievances of the cultivators oppressed by the indigo planters of Bihar. He proceeded to Champaran in order to conduct an enquiry. But the District Magistrate served on him an order to leave the district immediately. Gandhiji refused to obey and was tried for defiance. He pleaded guilty to the charge of disobeying the order, but he justified it on the ground that human authority must yield before the higher authority of conscience. It was a new plea in a court of law. But not altogether so, for in history men like Socrates and religious saints and martyrs had taken this line to justify their action before. But for the British magistrate utterly unused to such a procedure the plea was staggering. The Government of Bihar came to his rescue and Gandhiji was allowed to carry on his investigations. Ultimately the Government recognized the enormity of the indigo planters' oppression and the Champaran Agrarian Bill of 1917 proposed the abolition of the system.

Gandhiji was still at work in Bihar when he received requests to help and guide the peasants of Kheda who were finding difficulties in paying the rents owing to failure of crops. The second request was to intervene in a labour trouble in Ahmedabad. He took up the question of the mill hands of Ahmedabad first. He advised the workers to strike but to observe non-violence against both the mill-owners and the black legs, and to remain firm. Unfortunately after two weeks they began to waver, so Gandhiji announced that he would go on a fast till the strike was settled. This confirmed the workers in their resolve and touched the heart of the mill-owners. The strike ended with a settlement satisfactory to both parties.

Then he plunged into the Kheda struggle, which ended in a compromise. Gandhiji felt that it was not satisfactory, but it marked the beginning of an awakening among the peasants of Gujarat.[19]

These incidents were like the flapping of wings before the start of his flight into the high empyrean. Gandhiji happened casually to read in the papers the Rowlatt Committee's report, which had been published. He exclaimed : "Its recommendations startled me." This was the beginning of the transformation from a loyal citizen of the empire who had so far believed, "that the Empire has been on the whole a power for good", to an extreme rebel whose new creed was "The British Empire today represents Satanism, and they who love God can afford to have no love for Satan."

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[19] Gandhi, M.K., *An Autobiography* (1948), p. 538.

The change in such a high-souled, scrupulously truth-loving person, marked the final stage in the destruction of the moral foundation of the British Empire in India. Gandhiji represented the conscience of India and the revolt in his mind was the starting point in the revolution which culminated in the end of the Empire.

His immediate reaction was to draft a pledge which committed the signatories who followed him and were convinced that the bills were unjust, subversive of all principles of liberty and justice and destructive of the elementary rights of an individual, "to refuse civilly to obey those laws in the event of those bills becoming law and until they were withdrawn."[20]

Meanwhile the Bill had become an Act. The pledge was followed by a call for *hartal* (a suspension of economic activity) on an all-India scale. The date was first fixed as the 30th March, 1919, but subsequently changed to April 6. It was to be a day of fasting and prayer, the day on which India opened non-violent war against British imperialism. Gandhiji wrote to the Viceroy, "The Satyagraha campaign constitutes an attempt to revolutionize politics and restore moral force to its original position."

The response to the call was amazing. Towns and villages in every part of the country vied with one another to make the *hartal* a success, to demonstrate that a common feeling stirred the hearts of all Indians. A new confidence was born, and it was the beginning of a new era.

Gandhiji noted, "The whole of India from one end to the other, towns as well as villages, observed a complete *hartal* on this day. It was a most wonderful spectacle."[21]

In Delhi the Satyagraha day was observed on March 30. Scenes of unprecedented enthusiasm were enacted. Hindus and Muslims joined in the demonstrations. Swami Shraddhananda, an eminent Arya Samaj leader, was invited to address the Muslims gathered in the great mosque, Jama Masjid. A huge procession marched through the streets. The fraternization of the Hindus and Muslims and the excitement in the masses were portents of danger in the eyes of the authorities. The only method known to them for dealing with such a phenomenon was to try and suppress it by force. Police obstruction, rioting, violence and shooting were the inevitable results.

In Bombay, where Gandhiji himself was present, immense crowds gathered on the Chaupati Beach and marched through the city without any incident. Gandhiji and Sarojini Naidu made speeches in a mosque. Gandhiji's books on which the Government had placed a ban were openly sold in defiance of orders.

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[20] *Bombay Chronicle*, 2 March, 1919, cited in Bamford, P.C., *Histories of the Non-cooperation and Khilafat Movements*, p. 4.

[21] M.K. Gandhi, *op. cit.*, p. 563.

Unfortunately at Ahmedabad and some places in Gujarat disturbances broke out.

But the worst was to happen in the Panjab. After the Delhi incident Gandhiji wanted to visit the city to investigate the causes of the trouble. But orders were issued disallowing his coming to Delhi. He was forced to return to Bombay and to remain in the Presidency. The news spread that he was arrested add excited passions and anger.

III. Amritsar Tragedy

The Panjab which had done most in contributing to the war effort was the most adversely affected of the provinces. In addition it had the misfortune of being ruled by Michael O'Dwyer, one of the worst specimens of Morley's Tchinovniks. The Rowlatt Bill had, as it were, sprinkled salt over the Panjab wounds. It brooked 'no vakil, no appeal, no *dalil* (argument),' [22] and threatened every public worker with dire consequences at the bidding of officers like O'Dwyer.

As the strains and stresses were greater in the Panjab, the agitation there was more extensive and intensive than in any other province. There was greater fervour, more strident emotions, larger gatherings of crowds, and all this tended to rowdy demonstrations, alarm of authorities and frequent clashes. Panjab had achieved a reputation for turbulence since the agrarian troubles of 1907. The conditions had greatly deteriorated since then. The province was feeling a sense of deep frustration and Gandhiji's call had an electrifying effect upon the people.

Already many meetings of protest had taken place all over the province. On the 6th April *hartals* were staged in Lahore and other towns. The Governor reacted fiercely. He told the provincial Legislative Council in a minatory speech :

"I, therefore, take this opportunity of warning all who are connected with political movements in the province that they will be held responsible for the proper conduct of meetings which they organise, for the language used at, and the consequences that follow from such meetings."[23]

The *Tribune* stigmatised the speech as blazing indiscretion.

On the 10th of April on the receipt of the news of Gandhiji's arrest a procession was taken out at Lahore. The police fired upon the student processionists. A crowd and a meeting were subjected to shooting. Three local leaders were deported.

But what happened at Lahore pales into insignificance compared with the horrors at Amritsar. Here protest meetings had started in February. On 23rd March was held a meeting in support of the Satyagraha movement, followed by another after 6 days to announce and explain the *hartal* on the 30th.

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[22] Bamford, P.C., *op. cit.*, p. 10.

[23] *Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Panjab*, 1919, Vol. X, pp. 290-91.

The immediate reaction of the authorities was to prohibit one of the leaders, Satyapal, from speaking in public. This did not frighten the citizens and on the 30th a *hartal* was observed and a meeting was held in Jallianwala Bagh. On the 4th April another leader, Saifuddin Kitchlew, was served with a similar notice as Satyapal and a number of others were restrained. On the 6th a complete *hartal* was observed but peace was maintained. The Deputy Commissioner was chagrined and immediately asked for additional military force. On the 9th April there was a Hindu festival and large processions of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs streamed through the streets.

Gandhiji who at the invitation of the leaders was travelling to the Panjab was stopped at Palwal and prohibited from entering the province.

On the next morning (10th April), Kitchlew and Satyapal were deported from Amritsar. The two incidents infuriated and provoked the people. Mobs gathered to see the Deputy Commissioner and entreat him to cancel the orders. The military pickets tried to stop them from moving towards the Deputy Commissioner's House. The mounted police then fired on the crowd causing some deaths and injuries to many others. The mob was filled with anger. There was a melee, firing took place from one side and stone-throwing from the other. More crowds gathered and were hailed with bullets. Then the maddened mob broke all bounds, brutal acts of destruction–arson, plunder and murder followed. O'Dwyer in depriving Amritsar of its leaders pledged to non-violence had sown the wind, and India reaped the whirlwind—the crop of a massacre of innocents.

Amritsar was handed over to the military authorities on the 11th and Brigadier Dyer took charge the same night. Proclamations were issued on the 12th and 13th April giving warnings of dire consequences if meetings were held or processions taken out and violence indulged in.

The reaction of the people was to make a protest against these threats A meeting was summoned at the Jallianwala Bagh in the afternoon of 13th April. Dyer regarded it as a challenge to his authority and decided to disperse it by force, to make an example and teach a lesson.

The Jallianwala Bagh was an open enclosure surrounded by buildings with only one narrow entrance through which an armoured car could not pass. There were three or four small openings on the other side. In this enclosure, according to various estimates, fifteen to twenty-five thousand people had gathered. They were peacefully listening to the speeches of the leaders when Dyer and his men appeared at the main gate. Dyer immediately deployed his troops and without any warning, opened fire. Men fell dead in hundreds, many were crushed in the blind stampede that ensued. The dead piled up, the wounded lay in agony groaning and crying for water, but the fire continued till the ammunition was exhausted. Dyer then moved away from the slaughter house proudly surveying his handiwork, unconcerned about the dead and the wounded.

The exact figures of the killed and the injured will never be known, whether 379—which was the official version—died, or one thousand, is irrelevant. The fact is that while the Government in England was announcing its intention to train Indians for self-government through political reforms, its agents in India were actually giving Indians lessons in frightfulness to develop the qualities of servility, cowardice, hypocrisy and sycophancy.

Jallianwala Bagh massacre was not an isolated incident, it was only one among the large number of instances of the general policy of terrorising the people pursued in the Panjab. In Amritsar the massacre was followed by clamping the curfew order which remained in force for two months. What was worse, water and electricity supply were cut off. Flogging and whipping were common and an order was given that anyone passing through the lane in which an Englishwoman, Miss Sherwood, had been assaulted, should crawl through it on his belly. Numerous people were tried under the martial law, proclaimed on April 13, numerous people were sentenced—many to death, others to transportation for life and various terms of imprisonment.

At Lahore a procession was fired on thrice on the 10th and again on the 17th. On the 16th three respected leaders of Lahore—Rambhaj Dutt Chowdhury, Harkishen Lal and Duni Chand, were invited to the Deputy Commissioner's house, arrested and deported. Martial Law was declared and the *hartal* broken by military force. The martial law regime from 15th of April to 29th of May was a horrid tale of atrocious dealings—commandeering of transport, stopping of free distribution of food to the needy, convictions by the summary courts, imprisonment, stripes, public flogging, marching students 16 miles a day in the hot midday sun of May, etc. Even so eminent a scholar as the Minto Professor of Economics in the Calcutta University, Manohar Lal, was thrust into prison without cause shown, all with the deliberate purpose of humiliating and terrorising the people.

In Kasur (near Lahore and Amritsar) on the 13th April the mob excited by the news from Amritsar committed arson and plunder. The authorities proclaimed martial law. The horrors of Lahore and Amritsar were repeated. The military officer in charge exercised his ingenuity to impose fancy punishments.

At Gujranwala bombs were thrown on a boarding house, machine guns were fired into villages and in the city to produce 'moral effect'

Indiscriminate arrests were made and people were subjected to humiliation, flogging and many indignities.

The gruesome tale was repeated at numerous other places. The Panjab was treated more or less as an enemy country newly conquered. Its people were taught not to dare challenge or criticize Government on pain of condign punishment.[24]

The English officials—civil and military, appeared on the stage in their true colour, with the thin veneer of civilization suddenly scrubbed out. They were gripped by fear, scared by shadows, and behaved like animals at bay, ferocious and bloodthirsty. O'Dwyer, the wilful and overbearing mentor, gave up the pretension of the moral basis of British rule and confessed his belief in the naked rule of the sword. His myrmidons excelled each other in relating their misdeeds before the Commission of Enquiry and exhibited no sense of shame or remorse.

"The Panjab was isolated, cut off from the rest of India ; a thick veil seemed to cover it and hide it from the outside eyes," exclaimed Jawaharlal Nehru.[25] But gradually the news percolated and India was convulsed. "Jallianwala Bagh kindled a conflagration throughout India."[26] There was an outburst of condemnation from every side. Rabindranath Tagore's renunciation of the knighthood conferred upon him by the British Government was a grand gesture repudiating the ruler's title to be the dispensers of recognition and honour.

Demands were made for the recall of O'Dwyer and Chelmsford. Indemnity for the prisoners was pressed and enquiry in the Panjab happenings urged, both in England and in India.

In England on behalf of the Home Rule League and the Liberal Federation deputations of eminent Indians were at work, giving evidence before the Joint Parliamentary Committee. Among them were Vithalbhai Patel, Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Mrs. Besant, Surendranath Banerjea, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Srinivasa Sastri and others. They impressed upon the Secretary of State the urgency of an enquiry into the recent events in order to pacify public opinion.

Montagu knew that the policy of ruling India by the sword alone was impossible, because you can do anything with bayonets but sit on them. He realised that the government—foreign or indigenous, could not rule a people for any length of time without the willing support of unquestioning acquiescence of a section of the effective classes of the people. Besides, he had a personal stake in the Indian affairs. He had worn himself out to process the Reforms and was naturally most anxious for their success. He made up his mind and in the Budget debate on May 22, gave a promise to hold an enquiry. He wrote to Chelmsford that "this method of government (O'Dwyerism) always brings sooner or later its rewards."[27]

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[24] The account is based largely on :

(1) *Report of the Commissioners appointed by the Punjab Sub-Committee of the Indian National Congress*;

(2) *Disorders Inquiry Committee Report* (Hunter), in six volumes; and

(3) V.N. Datt, *Jallianwala Bagh.*

[25] Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography* (1953), p. 42.

[26] Banerjea, Surendranath. *op. cit.*, p. 304.

On July 17, he wrote to the Viceroy about Dyer. He said, "It was the savage and inappropriate folly of the order which rouses my anger. I cannot admit that any service that Dyer has rendered anywhere can atone for action of this kind and I am very much worried that he should have escaped punishment for an order, the results of which are likely to be permanent."[28]

On August 6, 1919, Sinha, Under Secretary of State for India, speaking in the House of Lords repeated Montagu's promise of May 22, and stated, "You cannot have disturbances of this kind and of this magnitude without an enquiry into the causes and into the measures taken to cope with these disturbances."[29]

But Montagu's misfortune was "that the powers that be in India—the services —are wholly against us", so he tried to persuade the Governor General, "Don't let us make the mistake of defending O'Dwyerism, right or wrong. Nothing is so fatal to the British prestige in a developing country like India as a belief that there is no redress for mistakes, and, that whatever an official does, he will be backed, and not only that he will be backed, but his methods will be perpetuated."[30]

The Government of India stiffly opposed the proposal for an enquiry. But the Secretary of State had already committed himself and the Viceroy had no alternative but to yield. The Committee was announced on October 14, 1919, with Hunter as Chairman, four Englishmen, and three Indians—Setalvad, Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Khan, and Jagat Narain, as members.

The Committee examined a large number of witnesses including Dyer, the martial law officers, army officers and civil officers, and many persons involved in the disturbances. The Government of the Panjab placed at their disposal a large quantity of records, including the proceedings and orders of the Martial Law Courts and the Commissions. But the Committee was boycotted by the Congress "in view of the situation created by the refusal of the Government to accede to the request for the temporary release on adequate security of the principal Punjab leaders undergoing imprisonment", and the political leaders refused to appear before it.

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[27] Waley, S.D. *op. cit.,* p. 209.

[28] *Ibid.,* p. 217.

[29] *Parliamentary Debates,* House of Lords—Earl Russell's question and Lord Sinha's reply, August 6, 1919.

[30] Waley S.D., *op., cit.,* p. 217.

The Committee's report was not unanimous—the European members who were in a majority signed one report, the three Indian members prepared a separate report. The findings of the majority report were :

(1) that the disturbances were of the nature of a rebellion which might have developed into a revolution ;
(2) that the outbreaks were the result of the work of a definite organisation and were all connected ;
(3) that the proclamation of martial law in the circumstances was wholly justified ; and that firing was necessary to put down the mob excesses ;
(4) that the Government of India was blameless ;
(5) that Dyer's action was open to criticism for firing without warning and continuing the fire too long and excessively ; that Dyer's object of producing a sufficient moral effect was a mistaken conception of duty.

The minority disagreed with the first two findings, agreed that firing was justified, but the punishments like crawling, confiscation of property, flogging, salaaming, etc. were intended to terrorize and humiliate Indians.

On Dyer's conduct the Indian members commented more severely than the European. They compared his acts with the acts of frightfulness committed by the Germans in Belgium and France in 1914. They wrote, "We feel that Dyer by adopting an inhuman and un-British method of dealing with the subjects of His Majesty the King Emperor, has done great disservice to the interest of British rule in India."[31]

The Congress had appointed its own Committee of Enquiry. The Commissioners were Motilal Nehru (who resigned on having been elected President of the Congress of 1919), Fazlul Haq (who could not attend owing to important business), M. R. Jayakar (in place of Fazlul Haq), C. R. Das, Abbas Tyabji and M. K. Gandhi. They signed their report on February 20, 1920.

The Committee squarely charged Michael O'Dwyer, "who almost invariably appealed to passion and ignorance rather than to reason" and should how "serious a responsibility he incurred in misleading both the people and his superiors".[32] They accused him for using oppressive methods in recruiting soldiers for the war thereby creating the spirit of resistance and dissatisfaction which culminated in the disturbances of April 1919. The report went on to observe:

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[31] *Disorders Inquiry Committee Report,* the minority report, p. 114.

[32] *Report of the Commissioners appointed by the Punjab Sub-Committee of the Indian National Congress,* p. 7.

"We feel tempted to say that he (O'Dwyer) invited violence from the people, so that he could crush them. The evidence shows that he subjected the Punjabis to the gravest provocation under which they momentarily lost self-control."[33]

About Chelmsford they expressed the opinion : "Whilst, therefore, we do not think His Excellency was willingly neglectful of the interests of those who were entrusted to his charge by His Majesty, we regret to say that His Excellency Lord Chelmsford proved himself incapable of holding the high office to which he was called, and we are of opinion that His Excellency should be recalled."[34]

After carefully sifting all the evidence they came to the conclusions:

(1) "there was no conspiracy to overthrow the Government in the Punjab,"

(2) "no reasonable cause has been shown to justify the introduction of martial law,"

(3) "the Jallianwala Bagh massacre was a calculated piece of inhumanity towards utterly innocent and unarmed men, including children, and unparalleled for its ferocity in the history of modern British administration."[35]

The Government of India considered the Hunter Committee report and came to the conclusion that Dyer's action at Jallianwala Bagh was indefensible, that he went beyond any reasonable requirement of the case and that he misconceived his duty. It was, therefore, considered unwise to allow him to continue to hold his position. He was consequently retired from office on March 23, 1920.

A debate was raised in Parliament concerning Dyer's case. Montagu defended the decision of the Government of India on the ground that Britain could not retain its hold upon India by terrorism.[36] Churchill supported the Indian Government and repudiated the theory that Dyer had saved the Empire by his ruthlessness. He called the Jallianwala Bagh massacre "a monstrous event", "the greatest blot that has been placed upon it (English history) since the days gone by when we burned down Joan of Arc".[37] Bonar Law condemned Dyer.[38] Yet when votes were taken as many as 129 voted in favour of Dyer against 230 who supported the Government.[39]

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[33] *Ibid.,* p. 23.

[34] *Ibid.,* p. 157.

[35] *Ibid.,* p. 158.

[36] *Parliamentary Debates,* House of Commons, 8th July 1920, 5th Series, Vol 131, col. 1715.

[37] *Ibid.,* col. 1733.

[38] *Ibid.*

[39] *Ibid.*

In the House of Lords the Conservatives including many retired Anglo-Indian officials, vindicated Dyer by a majority vote. The Government, however, stuck to its decision, censured Dyer and deprived him of his command.

This led to a reaction in his favour. A huge fund was raised—£26,000, which was presented to him with a sword to mark the approbation of his services by his admirers.

In the meanwhile Gandhiji shocked by the violence in the Panjab (Amritsar, Lahore, Kasur, Gujranwala, etc.), Gujarat (Ahmedabad, Viramgam, Nadiad), and Bengal (Calcutta) complained with a lacerated heart, "I had called upon the people to launch upon civil disobedience before they had thus qualified themselves for it, and this mistake of mine seemed to me to be of a Himalayan magnitude."[40] He announced his decision to suspend passive resistance.

Unfortunately little change was visible in the attitude of the Government. The Martial Law regime was prolonged on the plea that the Afghans were hostile and had started an attack on the border. This led to the resignation of Sankaran Nair from the membership of the Viceroy's Executive Council.

An ordinance was made which delegated powers to the Panjab Government whereby any offence committed on or after 30th March, 1919 could be transferred to the Martial Law Tribunal. Gandhiji had already been externed from the Panjab. C. F. Andrews who was deputed to visit the Panjab and report was prohibited from entering. Later Eardley Norton, the lawyer, sent to defend the accused was similarly treated. Horniman, editor of the *Bombay Chronicle,* was deported from India for his criticism of the Panjab Government. The Government of India expressed its approval of the policy of O'Dwyer and shut its eyes on the misdeeds of the officers. Even before the Commission of Enquiry had started work, an Indemnity Bill was passed to protect the officers who had been concerned in the administration and who might have been found guilty. The British Committee of the Indian National Congress remarked, "Prussianism could go no further."[41]

IV. Prelude to Non-cooperation

During the days of Satyagraha the most heartening phenomenon was the fraternisation of the Hindus and the Muslims. The Hindus forgot their taboos about food and drink and accepted what a Muslim offered. The Muslims invited Hindu leaders to their mosques to give addresses. Swami Shraddhanand preached in the great mosque of Delhi, Jama Masjid. Gandhiji and Sarojini Naidu spoke in the mosque at Bombay. Muslims identified themselves with the Hindus in the *hartals* and Satyagraha, and braved the onslaught of the authorities—lathi charges, bullets, imprisonment, loss of property. Satyapal and Kitchlew were the twin leaders of Amritsar; Gandhi and Muhammad Ali jointly directed the nationalist movement.

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[40] Tendulkar, D.G., *Mahatma,* Vol. I, p. 316.

[41] Sitaramayya, Pattabhi, *The History of the Congress,* Vol. I, p. 352.

But the Muslims had a two-fold burden of calamities to bear—the Panjab wrongs and governmental repression on the one hand and the tragedy of Turkey on the other. For their strong advocacy of the case of the Sultan of Turkey, the Caliph of the Sunni Muslims, many Indian Muslims leaders had to pay a heavy price. Muhammad Ali, Shaukat Ali, Abul Kalam Azad and Mahmudul-Hasan were the most prominent among them. The tribulation of the Muslims on this account was an important factor in the political situation.

Thus, in the year 1919 the cup of misery was full to the brim. The important factors of unrest were the Martial Law in the Punjab and its punitive consequences, the defeat of Turkey and its apprehended dismemberment, the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms and their unsatisfactory character, the economic ills following in the wake of a terrible war, the tremendous revolution in Russia with its explosive ideology.

Faced with these formidable conditions, the Indian National Congress met in December 1919, at Amritsar—the scene of the April tragedy. The Amritsar session marks a radical transition in the history of the Congress. The session was presided over by Motilal Nehru—thus far a moderate in politics, but strong-willed and courageous. His national pride had been terribly hurt by the incidents in the Panjab and elsewhere. A number of other eminent moderate leaders also attended. Among them were Srinivasa Sastri, Madan Mohan Malaviya, B. N. Sarma, Mrs. Annie Besant. Many nationalist leaders were at the Congress—Tilak, the Ali brothers, Swami Shraddhanand and C. R. Das. Gandhiji was the central figure. He was the most active member of the Congress Enquiry Committee, apart from being the author and inspirer of Satyagraha. He had only a few weeks earlier presided over the All India Khilafat Conference—a proof of the confidence which he enjoyed among the Muslims, and had advised the Conference to withhold all cooperation from the Government in case the peace with Turkey was unsatisfactory. But at Amritsar, Gandhiji played a moderating role.

Among the matters discussed the important ones were :

(1) the problem of Panjab,
(2) the Government of India Act, 1919,
(3) the reorganisation of the Congress. As the reports of the Enquiry Committees were not yet published little could be said about the Panjab affairs. But the demand was made for the recall of Chelmsford and replacement of O'Dwyer.

At Gandhiji's insistence a resolution was passed condemning the violence indulged in by the people of the Panjab and Gujarat.

So far as the reforms were concerned, it was declared that they were "inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing", but it was recommended that they should be worked.

Then a resolution was passed appointing a Committee with Gandhiji as Chairman to consider the whole constitution of the Congress and suggest modifications. This was done because of the realization of the fact that the structure and functions, aims and methods. of the Congress were no longer suited to the new conditions in India. It was necessary that the Congress from being an annual reunion of politicians to ventilate Indian grievances, should be converted into a deliberative body determining national policies, and controlling and directing their execution. A new institution—the Congress Working Committee, was created ; the All-India Congress Committee was reorganized on a population basis, with 350 members. Provincial Committees were formed on a linguistic basis. In a nutshell the base of the Congress and its Committees were widened and entrusted with the task of translating the policies into action.[42] The new constitution which came into force inaugurated the Gandhian era in Indian politics.

V. THE KHILAFAT QUESTION

The transformation of the Congress was precipitated by the Khilafat movement. The Indian Muslims were in a state of ferment since the outbreak of the war. There was a great conflict in their minds, for the war had created a serious religious dilemma for them. As subjects of Britain they owed loyalty to the Government which had allowed them freedom of belief and worship, but in deference to their tradition they were bound to obey the Caliph who was the religious head of the Muslim community.

In 1918 the allies were riding on the wave of victory. Germany surrendered on November 11 and Turkey had capitulated on October 31. The Ottoman Empire lay shattered. The Arabs incited by the British revolted against their sovereign and Caliph. The Greeks encouraged by Lloyd George claimed the coastal strip including Smyrna.

In December 1918 both the Muslim League and the Congress had met in Delhi. The Chairman of the Reception Committee of the League was Dr. Ansari. He denounced Sharif Husain of Mecca who had raised the standard of rebellion against his acknowledged sovereign. He demanded the maintenance of the integrity and independence of the Muslim states. and the restoration of *Jazirat-ul-Arab* (the Arab region) containing the holy places of Islam to the Caliph. Hakim Ajmal Khan in his address as Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Congress echoed the sentiments of Dr. Ansari and expressed the gratitude of the

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[42] Kaushik, P.D., *The Congress Ideology and Programme 1920-1947*, p. 31.

Muslims to Gandhiji for his support to the Muslim demands.

During the period of the Panjab disturbances Abdul Bari of Ferangi Mahal, Lucknow, secured the support of a large number of Ulama to the Khilafat movement and the All-India Khilafat Conference was brought into existence.

At Amritsar in December 1919, Gandhiji and other Congress leaders discussed with the Khilafat leaders the plan of work for the removal of the Muslim grievances. A deputation that waited on the Viceroy on January 19, 1920, failed to get a satisfactory reply. "Turkey", the Viceroy told, "cannot expect any more than any other power which drew the sword for Germany wholly to escape the consequences of her action." In the Khilafat Conference held at Calcutta on February 20, 1920, under the presidentship of Abul Kalam Azad a resolution was passed on the non-cooperation movement and it was decided to send a deputation to London to present the Khilafat case before the British Government. On March 10, Gandhiji issued a manifesto in which he advocated the launching of a non-violent movement of non-cooperation. On the 19th of March a mourning day was observed.

On May 15, 1920, the terms of the Turkish Peace Treaty negotiated at Sevres were announced. Their harshness was excruciating for the Muslims. The Central Khilafat Committee met at Bombay and on the 28th of May, registered the Muslim claims and announced the decision to resort to non-violent non-cooperation.

In order to allay Hindu apprehensions a statement was issued which gave the assurance, "The Musalmans of India will fight to the last man in resisting any Musalman power that may have designs upon India."[43]

Azad gave his opinion based upon *Shariat* (Muslim Law) in these words :

"If India becomes independent and is ruled by a government which gives the same liberty to the Musalmans as to other communities, in that case it is the injunction of Islam that the Muslims should protect their country from invaders irrespective of whether the invaders are Muslim or even the army of the Caliph himself."[44]

Gandhiji was convinced of the justice of the Muslim cause. He stated, "I am bound as an Indian to share the sufferings and trials of fellow Indians. If I deem the Mohammadan to be my brother, it is my duty to help him in this hour of trial to the best of my ability, if his cause commends itself to me as just".[45]

On June 9, the Khilafat Committee met at Allahabad and enunciated four stages of non-cooperation, *viz.*,

(1) resignation of titles and honorary posts ;

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[43] Bamford, P.C., *op cit.*, p. 156.

[44] Syed Tufail Ahmad Manglori, *Musalmanon ka Roshan Mustaqbil* (Urdu), p. 512.

[45] *Young India*, 2 June, 1920.

(2) resignation of posts in the civil services of Government;
(3) resignation of services in the Police and Army ;
(4) refusal to pay taxes.

In July 1920, a Khilafat Conference was held in Sind and was attended by Gandhiji. He called upon the twenty-three crore Hindus to help seven crore Muslims and to desist from helping the Government.

The stage had arrived when it was necessary that a final decision must be taken. Gandhiji in an article entitled "Mr. Montagu on the Khilafat agitation" wrote :

"To my amazement and dismay I have discovered that the present representatives of the Empire have become dishonest and unscrupulous. They have no real regard for the wishes of the people of India and they count the honour of India as of little consequence. I can no longer retain affection for a Government so evilly manned as it is nowadays."[46]

On July 28 Gandhiji announced that non-cooperation would be inaugurated on August 1 with fasting and prayer, and suspension of business. Tilak promised his support to the non-cooperation programme. Unfortunately he passed away at midnight preceding the dawn of August 1. His bier was lifted by Gandhiji, Shaukat Ali and Dr. Kitchlew. "My strongest bulwark is gone," mourned Gandhiji. In the obituary notice he wrote, "A giant among men has fallen. The roar of the lion is hushed. . . . . For us, he will go down to the generations yet unborn as a maker of modern India. They will revere his memory as a man who lived for them and died for them. . . . Let us erect for the only Lokamanya of India an imperishable monument by weaving into our own lives his bravery, his simplicity, his wonderful industry and his love of his country."[47]

The non-cooperation campaign started with a bang on August 1. Gandhiji wrote on that date to the Viceroy, "The Imperial Government have acted in the Khilafat matter in an unscrupulous, immoral and unjust manner.... I can retain neither respect nor affection for such a Government", and along with the letter returned all the medals which the Government had bestowed on him as marks of appreciation for his services.

The next step was to obtain the approval and ratification of the Congress for non-cooperation. A special session of the organisation was, therefore, summoned in Calcutta on September 4. Meanwhile Gandhiji, Shaukat Ali, Muhammad Ali and other leaders toured extensively through India, rousing people's enthusiasm and laying stress upon Hindu-Muslim unity.

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[46] Tendulkar, D.G., *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 365.

[47] *Ibid.*, pp. 370-71.

The Congress met under the chairmanship of Lala Lajpat Rai. About 3,000 delegates attended and among them a large number were Muslims.

Gandhiji moved the following fateful resolution which in its preamble narrated the history of the Khilafat question and the Panjab wrongs and the failure of all efforts to secure a satisfactory solution :

"This Congress is further of opinion that there is no course left open for the people of India but to approve of and adopt the policy of progressive non-violent non-cooperation until the said wrongs are righted and Swaraj is established."

The resolution described the seven items of the programme of non-cooperation. The speech of Gandhiji was a most earnest plea for action: He asked, "If the Congress cannot wring justice from unwilling hands, how can it vindicate its existence and its honour?" He promised if there was sufficient response to the plan "you can gain Swaraj in the course of a year."[48]

After a prolonged discussion the resolution was passed on September 9 by a large majority. Among the minority Jinnah voted against the resolution, although as President of the Muslim League he had admitted, "There is no other course open to the people except to inaugurate the policy of non-cooperation, though not necessarily the programme of Mr. Gandhi."[49] In the Nagpur session of the Congress in December, 1,500 delegates attended and confirmed the non-cooperation resolution unanimously. Even those who opposed it at Calcutta supported it at Nagpur, with the exception of Jinnah.

The Congress resolution was strongly supported by a *Fatwa* (religious decree) issued by the Jamiatul Ulama-e-Hind calling upon the Muslims to boycott elections, government schools and colleges and law courts, and to renounce titles and ranks conferred by the Government The decree was signed by nearly 900 Ulama.

At Nagpur the new constitution of the Congress was adopted thus converting it into a working dynamic organisation for carrying on the struggle for independence.

The declaration of non-cooperation with the Government was in fact a revolutionary step tantamount to the proclamation of war, with this difference that the war was non-violent. This was a unique kind of war. It inflicted neither pain nor injury upon the opponent, reserving all suffering for the non-cooperator. This war demanded greater discipline, greater bravery, greater endurance, greater sacrifices, greater patience than the bloody war of weapons. It admitted of no evil passion—

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[48] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 12-15.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

anger or hatred, even against the enemy. It required burning faith in the righteousness of the cause and unflinching resolve in its pursuit, whatever befell, good or evil. These requirements made its pursuit much more difficult than the waging of a war of violence, and much more exacting too.

Gandhiji made it clear : "Complete civil disobedience is a state of peaceful rebellion—a refusal to obey every single state-made law. It is certainly more dangerous than an armed rebellion. For it can never be put down if the civil resisters are prepared to face extreme hardships. It is based upon an implicit belief in the absolute efficacy of innocent suffering."[50]

The Congress and the Khilafat Committee had agreed upon the triple purpose of non-cooperation—redress of Panjab grievances, rectification of Khilafat wrongs and establishment of Swaraj. Gandhiji felt it necessary to explain the grounds on which he joined the Khilafat movement. Essentially his reasons were humanitarian and moral. They were not political in the narrow sense, although undoubtedly intended at securing permanent national interests.

The Khilafat case was based on the fact that the Sultan of Turkey was the recognised Caliph, *i.e.* religious head of the Muslims and had to perform certain duties towards the holy places of Islam situated in the *Jazirat-ul-Arab* which were imposed upon him by virtue of his position. It was necessary that the holy places should be under his supervision and control. Therefore, the Khilafatists demanded :

(1) The maintenance of the religious prestige and temporal power of the Caliph—the Sultan of Turkey, which implied the unrestricted performance of the Caliph's duties in the preservation of the holy places, defined by the Muslim jurists as including Palestine, Mesopotamia and Arabia.

This did not, however, mean that direct Turkish rule need necessarily be imposed upon the Arabs in opposition to the wishes of their inhabitants. What was intended was to give complete self-government to them under the Caliph's control over the holy places.

As the demand was based upon the traditions of Islam and the injunctions of law it was regarded as the religious duty of the Muslims to give effect to it.

(2) The guaranteeing of the sovereignty of the Muslim States—forbidding the imposition of the mandates of Britain and France over the Arab states of the Fertile Crescent, converting Palestine into a Jewish home under the British protectorate and dividing Arabia among the tribal chiefs.

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[50] *Ibid.*, p. 71.

The case of the Muslims was based on the pledges which the British Prime Ministers--Asquith and Lloyd George, and the British Viceroy—Hardinge, had given about the holy places, the integrity of the Turkish dominion and independence of Muslim territories. But contrary to their pledges they had ruthlessly brushed them aside during the war.

The importance of the pledges was that the Muslim Indian troops had fought against the Muslim Turkish army in the various theatres of war in the belief that they would be implemented. But the British forces operating in the Middle East had not spared the holy places. Above all, the Treaty of Sevres threatened to break Turkey into shreds, the Greeks were incited to grab even the homeland of the Turks; the Arab provinces of Turkey—Syria and Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq were placed under French and British mandates, Palestine was assigned to the Jews as their national home, and Egypt was wrenched from the Turkish Empire and made a British protectorate.

There could not be a more flagrant case of breach of faith. It was the call of human sympathy as well as of moral conscience that India should support the Muslim demands. According to Gandhiji it would be a poor conception of patriotism if one section of the nation failed to come to the aid of the other in the hour of its need. And in the case of Khilafat it became an operative duty because of the justice of the case.

Gandhiji said : "It is just my sense of moral responsibilities which has made me take up the Khilafat question and to identify myself entirely with the Muhammadans. It is perfectly true that I am assisting and countenancing the union between Hindus and Moslems."[51]

After all during the agitation and the Satyagraha campaign against the Rowlatt Acts the Muslims had thrown themselves into the fire with an ardour of which any patriot could be justly proud. But nationalism is a delicate plant and it has to be nourished and fostered carefully and ceaselessly. Its basis is mutual confidence and brotherly affection and these wax and wane as the bonds of sentiment grow or fade.

Gandhiji, then, stood on firm ground so far as the moral and humanitarian aspects of the Turkish question were concerned, but it is doubtful if the political and practical implications were clearly recognised either by the leaders of the Khilafat movement or Gandhiji.

In the non-cooperation movement of Gandhiji nationalism and politics and religion and mysticism and fanaticism "formed a strange mixture". But, as Jawaharlal pointed out, "a demoralized, backward, and broken up people suddenly straightened their backs and lifted their heads and took part in disciplined, joint action on a countrywide scale. This action itself, we felt, would give irresistible power to the masses. We ignored the necessity of thought behind the action, we forgot that without a conscious ideology and objective the energy and enthusiasm of the masses must end largely in smoke."[52]

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[51] *Young India* (1919-22), p. 152.

Worse still, the Congress and Khilafat Committee paid little attention to the practical aspects of their objective, showed no awareness of the currents of political thought which were not new but had begun flowing strongly in Turkey during the war.

For this remissness Indians had to pay a heavy price.

In any case, the challenge to the might of an empire which had just emerged victorious from a war against a determined and powerful enemy was an act of magnificent courage. Gandhiji and a large band of devoted workers swept through the country, its many towns and numerous villages carrying aloft the banner inscribed with the message of non-cooperation.

VI. NON-COOPERATION

The campaign had two kinds of objects : constructive and destructive. In the pursuance of the former, it was decided to raise a fund of one crore of rupees in the name of Tilak to finance the non-cooperation activities; to enrol a volunteer corps of one crore members to help in the promotion of the various boycotts—social, educational, legal and economic, and to distribute twenty lakh spinning wheels to provide work for the unemployed or underemployed and to replace foreign cloth by hand-made Indian cloth.

In regard to the latter, the important items were :—

(1) the boycott of the law courts by the lawyers who would set up popular tribunals for administering justice;

(2) the boycott of schools and colleges owned or aided or recognised by Government and the establishment of national educational institutions;

(3) the boycott of elections to the assembly and the provincial councils;

(4) the surrender of honours, titles, etc. and the boycott of official functions;

(5) the boycott of British goods and the encouragement of Swadeshi, especially *Khaddar* or home-spun, home-woven cloth; and

(6) the prohibition of drinking liquor.

The country was profoundly stirred and an unprecedented wave of enthusiasm ran through India's teeming millions. Unparalleled scenes of fervour, devotion and sacrifice were witnessed everywhere. Lawyers of the distinction of Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, Rajendra Prasad, Rajagopalachari, surrendered their highly profitable profession; thousands of students came out of colleges and schools and many national institutions were founded where teachers worked on a pittance. A number of pupils of the Aligarh University left their studies at the bidding of Muhammad Ali and founded the Jamia Millia Islamia which later shifted to Delhi. Subhas Chandra Bose resigned his post in the Indian Civil Service and worked as Principal of the National College at Calcutta. Jawaharlal Nehru bade adieu to the Allahabad High Court and was drawn into the whirlpool of non-cooperation. He gave expression to the feelings which moved the non-cooperators in these words :

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[52] Nehru, Jawaharlal, *An Autobiography*, p. 76.

"Many of us who worked for the Congress programme lived in a kind of intoxication during the year 1921. We were full of excitement and optimism and a buoyant enthusiasm. We sensed the happiness of a person crusading for a cause. . . . Above all we had a sense of freedom and a pride in that freedom. The old feeling of oppression and frustration was completely gone."[53]

Gandhiji had cleared the way of self-recovery through this vital upheaval from within. He generated the explosive force needed for such an upheaval within the soul of India, which "could not come through loans and gifts and grants and concessions and proclamations from without".[54]

From the first of August 1920 when it started to 6th February, 1922 when it was suspended, the non-cooperation campaign moved in crescendo. The Tilak Fund was over-subscribed as a result of Umar Sobhani's self-sacrificing efforts; lakhs of spinning wheels were distributed and began plying; the recruitment of volunteers reached half the targete. Of the triple boycott, the response in regard to honours was meagre which was not surprising; the educational boycott was quite effective in the beginning. The number of students in colleges was reduced from 52,482 in 1919-20 to 45,933 in 1921-22, and in secondary schools from 1,281,810 in 1919-20 to 1,239,524 in 1921-22.[55] But to provide for the education of the large numbers involved was a difficult job and although many colleges and schools were established, many could not be accommodated and had to go back to their institutions. Similar was the case with the legal profession. Because of lack of alternative employment for persons who had to maintain families, it was not possible for a large number to give up their only means of livelihood. But in cases against the non-cooperators, the accused refused to participate and put up no defence in the trial courts. So far as the boycott of elections was concerned, the politicians of the moderate liberal school and sundry others had made up their minds to stand for the councils. The Congress abstained from voting but demonstrated quite convincingly its hold upon the electorate, and exposed the unrepresentative character of those elected.

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[53] *Ibid.*, p. 69.

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 66 (Quotation from C.F. Andrews, *Independence the Immediate Need.*)

[55] Bamford, P.C., *op. cit.*, p. 103.

The effect of the boycott of foreign cloth was felt throughout India. It attained considerable success in Bengal, Bombay, Madras and the United Provinces (Uttar Pradesh). The review of the Trade of India in 1921-22 published by the Commercial Intelligence Department stated "Another factor which seriously affected piece-goods importations during the year under review was the vigorous revival... of the campaign in favour of Indian-made piece-goods, reinforced by a further development in favour of the wearing of home-woven goods made from Indian hand-spun yarn."

Regarding the boycott of liquor during the year 1921-22 the excise reports of most provinces show that it had considerable effect in reducing excise revenue. In the Panjab, Bihar and Orissa and Bombay the reduction was respectively 33, 10 and 6 lakhs of rupees.

It is not possible to narrate all the incidents of this amazing campaign of twenty months in which the Hindus and Muslims worked shoulder to shoulder for the dual cause of Khilafat and Swaraj. But some are noteworthy. In June 1920 Abdul Bari of Lucknow gave a *fatwa* signed by many divines declaring India to be *Dar-al-Harb*, which presented to the Muslims with the alternative of *Jihad* (holy war) or *Hijrat* (emigration). This was reiterated in November 1920, as *'muttafiqa fatwa'* (joint decree). It is estimated that nearly 18,000 Muslims mostly from Sind and the North-West Frontier Province left for Afghanistan. The Afghan authorities refused to admit them, and they had to return homeless and miserable.

By July 1921, the non-cooperation movement had thoroughly roused the country, but had made little impression upon the British rulers and the settlement of the Khilafat question was as far as ever. The result was that frustration and bitterness rose high. The All India Khilafat Conference which met at Karachi on 8th July, therefore, called upon the Muslim soldiers of the Indian army to abandon service as it was religiously unlawful. For this Muhammad Ali was arrested on 14th September and prosecuted. Gandhiji then issued a manifesto saying, "It is contrary to national interest for any Indian to serve as a civilian, and more especially as a soldier, under Government."[56]

The Congress Working Committee met on October 5 and endorsed the resolution of the Khilafat Conference and asked the people to repeat the speech of Muhammad Ali at public meetings. At this meeting the Provincial Congress Committees were authorised to launch civil disobedience movements.

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[56] Cendulkar, D.G., *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 82.

In November 1921, the Prince of Wales arrived in India. The All-India Congress Committee had decided to boycott the visit. *Hartals*, demonstrations and political meetings greeted him in the places he visited. Unfortunately in Bombay the mob went out of control and there were riotous scenes of mob violence and police reprisals in several places.

In Calcutta under the leadership of C.R. Das civil disobedience was started. As the Congress volunteers were declared illegal, he issued an appeal for the enlistment of volunteers. His son and wife offered themselves and were arrested immediately. As a consequence the number of volunteers swelled to thousands and intense excitement prevailed in the city. On December 10, Das himself was apprehended. His stirring message to Bengal before the arrest was :

"I feel the handcuffs on my wrists and the weight of iron chains on my body. It is the agony of bondage. The whole of India is a vast prison. The work of the Congress must be carried on. What matters it whether I am taken or left? What matters it whether I am dead or alive?"[57]

VII. The Moplah Rising

One of the most unfortunate incidents of the movement was the rising of the Moplahs in Kerala. The Moplahs were the descendants of the Arabs who had settled in this region over a thousand years ago. Most of them were poor and ignorant and were occupied in agriculture or petty trade. They were very backward and were greatly under the influence of their Qazis and Maulavis known as Thangals. From February 1921, the non-cooperation propaganda began to spread in Kerala. On 16th February four leaders—two Hindus and two Muslims, were arrested. Excitement began to grow, conferences were held, and more persons were imprisoned. The Khilafatist meetings where the wrongs of Islam were described, intensified religious feelings. The authorities attempted to suppress the movement which seemed to threaten law and order. The Moplahs then rebelled and started a guerilla war with swords and spears against guns and rifles. The inflamed Moplahs committed terrible atrocities against the administration as well as their Hindu neighbours. For some time the administration was paralysed. The Government called in troops to suppress the rising and measures of extreme severity were taken against the rebels. In the middle of October martial law was imposed and by the end of the year peace was restored.

A great controversy had raged about the causes of the rising. Even officials of Government took opposite views regarding the inciting causes. Innes, Acting Collector of Malabar, on the one hand, held that the economic conditions were mainly responsible for the troubles which disturbed Malabar from time to time. On the other hand, Evans, his superior, controverted this thesis and held that the Moplah discontent could not be traced to economic factors like the land tenure system, but was the result of political incitement.

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[57] Cited in Nehru, Jawaharlal, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

The Madras Government, while agreeing with Evans, admitted, "It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that to some extent at least the phenomena which appeared in the North during the last century—the growth of population, the rise in prices, the substitution of competition for custom, the consequent friction between landlords and tenants and its sequels, litigations, evictions, exactions must have manifested themselves in Malabar."[58]

In the existing economic conditions there was ample predisposition to disturbances. The feelings stirred by the India-wide agitation for Khilafat and Swaraj proved an aggravating factor, and then the police excesses—the prohibition of entry into Malabar to persons like Rajagopalachari and Yaqub Hasan, the arrests on a large scale of leaders, and the attempt to suppress the non-violent non-cooperation movement proved the last straw. The religious passions were excited and fanaticism exploded in unspeakable horrors.

The measures for the suppression of the rising were as savage as the barbarous deeds of Moplahs. Troops were concentrated upon the land from Nepal, Garhwal and Burma. Gurkhas, Garhwalis, Kachins were utter strangers to the people and therefore wholly devoid of any sympathy in suppressing the rebels. The atrocities committed by the Moplahs were answered by ruthless punishment under martial law. Of the rebels, 2,226 were killed in action, 1,615 wounded, 5,688 captured and 38,256 surrendered. The worst incident of this revolting affair was the packing off of nearly 150 Moplahs in a wagon of a goods train which slowly travelled under the scorching rays of the mid-summer sun from Calicut to Madras, and when the wagon was opened at a wayside station it was found that 66 Moplahs had died of suffocation and the rest were in a precarious condition.

The immediate effects of the Moplah outrages were deplorable. The fires of communalism were stoked. The Muslim communalists either denied the atrocities or minimised them and tried to shift the blame. Moreover, the Moplahs were praised for their religious zeal and bravery. The Hindu communalists were horrified. The exaggerated tales which reached the North inflamed feelings. The cry of Hinduism in danger was raised and movements of *Shuddhi* (reconversion) and *Sangathan* (organisation) planned. A vicious circle of accusation and counter-accusation was set up which created the heat in which the tender plant of Hindu-Muslim unity began to wither.

But in spite of the grave shock, the non-cooperation movement showed no sign of relaxation as the boycott of the Prince of Wales demonstrated.

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[58] Home Department Political, 1922, Proposed questions regarding the tenancy question in Malabar.

In fact the enrolment of the prescribed number of volunteers was accelerated, with the result that Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Lajpat Rai and many others were sent to jail.

As the situation was deteriorating, Malaviya, Jinnah and Bhurgri intervened to bring about a settlement. The intermediaries met Reading in Calcutta in December 1921 and it was decided to call a Round Table Conference to find a solution. Gandhiji's demand was the release of all the prisoners including those who had been jailed for issuing the *Fatwa* or preaching boycott of military service as a pre-condition of the Conference. But the Viceroy refused to agree to a general release. The proposal fell through.

In the Christmas of 1921 the Congress met at Ahmedabad and in the absence of C.R. Das who had been gaoled, Ajmal Khan presided. An appeal was made to young men over 18 years of age to join the volunteer corps. It was decided that both individual and mass civil disobedience might be launched, and Gandhiji was appointed as the sole dictator to decide on the time, the manner and the object of civil disobedience. At this session the Ulama played an active part.

The situation was worsening every day and a crisis seemed imminent. Malaviya and others called an All-Parties Conference in the middle of January 1922 which was attended by Gandhiji, Jinnah; Jayakar and Natarajan acted as Secretaries. At the behest of the Conference the Congress Working Committee postponed the inauguration of civil disobedience. But the Viceroy was still adamant on the question of the release of prisoners, and the proposal was rejected. It was obvious that by insisting upon keeping certain classes of prisoners behind the bars, Government hoped to create a division between the Congress and the Khilafat Conference. The Congress leaders were not prepared to fall into the trap.

Negotiations with the Government broke down. The Senior Governors were opposed to a policy of appeasement and the British Cabinet disapproved it.[59] Reading was now ready to take the strong line. Repression was let loose at full blast. Gandhi addressed a letter to the Viceroy in February giving notice of his intention to start civil disobedience at Bardoli in case Government failed to settle the Khilafat question and undo the Panjab wrongs. The response of the Viceroy was negative, as he was fully prepared to suppress the movement.

Unfortunately on the 5th of February, a tragic event occurred at Chauri Chaura, a small town in the district of Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh. A number of policemen came into conflict with a procession. Being overwhelmed they took refuge in the *thana* (police station). The violent mob set fire to the building reducing men and all to ashes. Other violent deeds had taken place elsewhere, *e.g.* in Madras, at the time of the visit of the Prince of Wales.

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[59] *Reading Papers :* Montagu to Reading, telegram 20 December 1921 refers to telegrams from Governors to Viceroy.

In the face of spreading violence what needed to be done? Gandhiji was a votary of absolute non-violence in thought, word and deed. The people, however, had not imbibed the spirit which provided the basis for his philosophy of life. The responsibility for this breach of the moral law which was dearer to him than his own life and even the freedom of the nation lay heavily upon his conscience.

It was also abundantly clear that violence on the part of the people would usher in the reign of general disorder and indiscipline with the result that the leadership of the masses which the Congress had exercised would be wrested from its hand. The country would be taken over by anarchy and the Government would be furnished with sufficient excuse to resort to the employment of unlimited force involving large-scale destruction of life and property. 1857 would be repeated with unforeseeable consequences.

What Gandhiji later said about Bardoli applied to the situation created by Chauri Chaura. His words were : "Suppose the non-violent disobedience of Bardoli was permitted by God to succeed and the Government had abdicated in favour of the victors of Bardoli, who would control the unruly elements that must be expected to perpetuate inhumanity upon due provocation?"[60] He was not sure that he could.

In the circumstances he decided to suspend the non-cooperation movement and to abandon the programme of civil disobedience at Bardoli. A meeting of the Congress Working Committee was held on 12th February to confirm the decision.

The decision was tantamount to an acknowledgement of defeat. But the defeat was not palatable to a number of prominent leaders of the Congress, especially because their faith in non-violence was not as thorough-going and immutable as that of Gandhiji. Das and Motilal Nehru differed from the decision and wrote angry letters questioning the propriety of the resolution of the Working Committee. Jawaharlal Nehru was equally puzzled and distressed. The question was why did Gandhiji not realize the far-reaching consequences of his admission. For if the success of civil disobedience was apprehended to unleash uncontrollable forces of evil, there remained no justification for the movement unless chaos was regarded as preferable to order enforced by foreign rule.

The sudden stoppage of the movement which had raised enthusiasm to a very high pitch was bound to create confusion. The result was that Congress leaders became divided in two groups—(1) those in favour of continuing the non-cooperation and the boycott programme, (2) those who desired to abandon the boycott of the Councils in order to use them for national purposes, *viz.*, Swaraj.

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[60] Fischer, L., *Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 219.

The Khilafatists were also divided into groups. A large number lost all faith in non-cooperation and Gandhiji's leadership and began to look to Government for help; the rest continued to believe in Gandhian methods which alone could lead India to its goal.

Taking advantage of this division among the nationalist forces, Government which had hesitated to move against Gandhiji so far took a quick decision and arrested him on March 10. His trial began a week later on the 18th. Gandhiji offered no defence. On the contrary he pleaded guilty to the charge of promoting disaffection towards the Government and asked for the severest punishment. He made, however, a statement—frank and dignified, to explain why he, who was loyal to the Empire heretofore, became disaffected towards it. The statement was a severe indictment of British rule and a reasoned justification of the non-violent non-cooperation movement.

The Judge convicted him and sentenced him to six years' imprisonment. He was confined in Yeravda Central Prison in Poona.

VIII. THE CONGRESS DIVIDED

In the absence of Gandhiji, the Congress Committees spent a great deal of time in taking stock of the affairs and discussing the future line of action. A Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee was set up to take stock of the situation and assess the attitude of the people. The Committee presented its report in August 1922. It came to the conclusion that the country was not prepared to continue the movement, and recommended the entry of Congressmen into the legislative councils.

The proposal was discussed by the All-India Congress Committee in November. The Congress at Gaya in December was presided over by Das who was a strong protagonist of Council entry. But the spirit of non-cooperation was strong and the disciples of Gandhiji and the Khilafat leaders combined to defeat Das's proposal. This led to the resignation of Das from the presidentship. On January 1, 1923, Das and Nehru formed the Swaraj Party.

Soon the decision to accommodate the views of the party which favoured a change in the Congress arose, and a special session of the Congress was held at Delhi in September 1923 to reconsider the earlier resolution. It was then decided to give permission to the Swarajists to exercise their right to vote in electing Congressmen to the Councils.

The elections took place in November 1923 and the Swaraj Party contested them with great success. The Moderates were defeated, and the Swarajists were returned in considerable strength in most provinces. In the Central Provinces and Bengal the Swarajists were in a position to command the majority. In the Legislative Assembly 48 Swarajists led by Motilal Nehru and 24 independents with Jinnah as their chief formed the opposition to the Government which commanded only 39 votes—25 officials and 14 nominated members.

The Congress which met at Cocanada under Muhammad Ali's chairmanship in December 1923 endorsed the Delhi resolution. Thus the umbilical cord which bound the Swaraj Party to the mother organisation was not cut. On February 5, 1924, Gandhiji was released from prison prematurely because of his serious illness. He issued a statement on May 22 in which after explaining his own position as a no-changer he said, "I would, therefore, be no party to putting any obstacles in their (Swarajists) way or to carrying on any propaganda against the Swarajists' entry into the legislatures."[61]

The Civil Disobedience programme had already been suspended and the no-changers were directed to devote their energies to the constructive programme. The first phase of the struggle was thus over.

The Khilafat agitation also lost its elan when in Octobe 1922 the Turkish nationalists under the leadership of Mustafa Kamal Pasha abolished the monarchy and established the Turkish Republic. The nephew of the deposed Sultan, Abdul Majid Effendi, was elected as Caliph, but he was shorn of all political authority. Thus the case of the Indian Khilafatists that the Caliph must wield temporal power was knocked out. Two years later the office of the Caliph too was abolished. The Muslim community in India was thus thrown into the whirlpool of confusion, with consequences which did not augur well for the nationalist movement.

IX. THE COUNTER-ATTACK OF GOVERNMENT

When in August 1920 Gandhiji started the non-cooperation campaign, the Government treated it lightly and tried to belittle it. Chelmsford who was then the Governor-General called it the foolishest of all foolish activities. Nevertheless the movement rapidly gathered strength and the governors of the provinces began to press the Government of India to take serious notice of the growing excitement and unrest which was creating increasing trouble for the administration; and what was worse, was bringing the prestige of Government down.

Vincent, the Home Member of the Government of India, visited Bengal in July 1921 and drew the attention of the Viceroy to the deteriorating condition in Bengal and Assam, and informed him that the Governor, the officials and the European merchants and planters were anxious about the situation. When the All-Parties Conference was announced at Bombay by Malaviya, Jinnah and Jayakar, the Governor of Bombay wired to the Viceroy his view that Gandhiji should be immediately arrested.[62]

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[61] Tendulkar, D.G., *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 172.

From the other provinces similar demands were made from time to time, so that when Reading assumed the Governor-Generalship on 2nd April, 1921, he had to pay immediate attention to the problem. Reading, one of the front rank politicians of the Liberal Party in England, succeeded a mediocrity like Chelmsford, and it did not take him long to determine the course of action. In fact the course was already chalked out by his predecessors. The old threefold policy had to be vigorously applied, *viz.*,

(1) to conciliate the politicians who offered cooperation to the Government by showering favours and honours on them,
(2) to suppress the non-cooperators and the intransigents, and
(3) to exploit communal differences.

Under the first item Government had already conferred a peerage on S.P. Sinha giving him charge of piloting the Government of India Bill of 1919 in the House of Lords as the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for India. He was later appointed as the Governor of Bihar and Orissa. Tej Bahadur Sapru, one of the pillars of the Liberal Federation, was appointed in May 1920 member of the Viceroy's Executive Council.

Another move in the same direction was the opening of the Chamber of Princes at the hands of the Prince of Wales. Societies to combat the non-cooperation and Khilafat movements were organised, *e.g.* the Aman Sabha.

The policy succeeded only to a limited extent. The working of the India Act of 1919 had at the start evoked the enthusiasm of the Moderates who had welcomed the reforms eagerly. But soon the mood changed. They found that in the Assembly the resolutions of the elected members for the Indianisation of services, extension of reforms, abrogation of repressive laws received scant response from the Government. Their efforts to dissuade Government from repression, in order to bring about the cessation of non-cooperation and the settlement of differences at a round table conference, failed because of the narrowly legalistic attitude of Government. Their doubts about the utility of the visit of the Prince of Wales were brushed aside.

In the Provinces the ministers found insuperable difficulties in the proper functioning of the departments in their charge. They discovered limitations of all kinds which reduced their authority and barred reform and improvement. The overriding powers of the Governors, the control of finance by the Executive Councillors, the dependence on the executive services not under their control, minimized their usefulness. They were obliged to agree with the extremist criticism that the reforms were inadequate and unsatisfactory. The attempts of the Liberal members of the Assembly to broaden the authority of the ministers so as to cover the whole field of provincial administration met with stiff opposition from all the Viceroys and Secretaries of State—Chelmsford and Reading, Montagu, Peel and Olivier.

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[62] Home Department, Government of India Political No. 89/1922; from Governor of Bombay to Viceroy, 4 January, 1922.

Lloyd George, who was Prime Minister during the greater part of this period, in his famous speech in Parliament on August 2, 1922, knocked all talk of reform on the head. In the course of his speech he said, "I can see no period when they (Indians) can dispense with the guidance and assistance of the small numbers of the British Civil Service. They are the steel frame of the whole structure." He added, "Britain will in no circumstances relinquish her responsibility in India."[63]

The policy of outright repression developed gradually. In the early stages the Government moved cautiously making use of the laws on the Statute Book, like the Criminal Amendment Act and the Seditious Meetings Act. When the Khilafatists began to advocate the boycott of the military services, prosecutions were started against them. By November 1921 a number of non-cooperators had been put behind the bars. But the boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales in November was a matter which involved the prestige of the Government and, therefore, it was considered necessary to go all out to suppress the anti-government demonstrations. In the month of November 1921, the Congress and Khilafat volunteer organisations were banned. Local Governments zealously took action and by January 1922 more than 30,000 individual civil resisters were jailed including a great many leaders. This was crowned with the arrest and conviction of Gandhiji in March 1922. Repression continued after his arrest.

The third limb of the policy consisted of the old and well-tried device of utilizing Hindu-Muslim differences. Unfortunately for the Government of India the foreign policy of the Liberal Party of Britain since the days of Gladstone had been anti-Turkish. When in 1905 the Liberals came into power the Indian Muslims were fluttered. They started with a bias against Morley. Minto, however, was credited by them with having persuaded Morley to follow in India the policy of favouring the Muslims. But after 1910 when the western powers including Britain began to dismember the Ottoman Empire the Muslims became hostile to Britain.

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[63] *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, 5th Series, Vol. 157, col. 1513.

The war which came in 1914 found Britain and Turkey on opposite sides. During the war the Government had to utilize the services of the Indian troops containing a considerable number of Muslims to fight against their enemies, including Turkey. Could they be relied upon to join battle with the Muslim troops of the Ottoman Sultan who was their religious head, especially when the Shaikhul Islam of Turkey had declared *Jihad* against the Christian powers?

Fatwas were obtained from obliging Ulama declaring that to fight for the British rulers was not a breach of religious injunctions. The British statesmen made reassuring statements that they had no intention to interfere with the exercise of Caliphate authority or to seize Turkish national territories, including Thrace.

The Government felt satisfied that with the exception of the extremist Ulama and a few extremist leaders, the large majority of the Muslim intellectuals were with them. But they continued to urge upon the Government in England the desirability of making concessions to Turkey. Montagu in consideration of the demands of the Khilafatists pressed their cause in the cabinet. Reading before leaving for India wrote to Lloyd George that the objections of the Indian Muslims to the Treaty of Sevres "form one of the main causes of the unrest". He added, "I know you are surrounded with difficulties. I do not want to add to them and am writing only for the purpose of telling you how important it is, in my judgment, to make concessions to Mohammedan opinion."[64]

On February 28, 1922, Reading sent a telegram to Montagu which contained the following words :

"We urge upon His Majesty's Government three points which... we ourselves regard as essential :

(1) the evacuation of Constantinople;
(2) the Sultan's sovereignty over the Holy Places;
(3) restoration of Ottoman Thrace, including the sacred Moslem city of Adrianople, and the unreserved restoration of Smyrna.

We earnestly trust that His Majesty's Government will give these aspirations all possible weight, for their fulfilment is of the greatest importance to India. ... So important is it for the Government of India to range itself openly on the side of Moslem India that we press for permission to publish the foregoing... forthwith."[65]

This telegram was followed by another on March 4 pressing for permission to publish the earlier telegram as Gandhi's arrest was expected within the next few days. It stated that the latest reports from the provinces showed that the violent disturbances which had broken out there were largely attributed to the turbulent and fanatical elements among all the Mohammedans.

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[64] Montgomery Hyde, H., *Lord Reading*, pp. 331-32.

[65] *Ibid.*, pp. 371-72.

Montagu cabled permission to publish the telegram without consulting any of his Cabinet colleagues. Lloyd George was so incensed and Curzon was so upset that they immediately demanded his resignation.

The publication of the telegram, however, admirably served the purpose of the Government of India. The Muslims were duly impressed with the bona fides of the rulers. On March 15 Abdullah Khan wrote from Lucknow to Muhammad Shafi, member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, the following letter :

"The enclosed letter from Maulvi Abdul Bari in which he has asked me to convey to Lord Reading and his Government expressions of Maulana's devotion and gratefulness will speak for itself. I called a meeting last night at my house where there were Mushir Hussain Kidwai, Maulana Abdul Bari, Hasrat Mohani and practically all the local leaders. A prolonged discussion ensued for nearly four hours and the result is this letter and a manifesto in which they are advising the Musalmans to give up all hostile activities and stand by the Government..

The most important thing now is to work up the Muslim feeling. What astonished me was Hasrat's attitude. He was for dropping non-cooperation altogether. He said our quarrel with the Government was that it was anti-Islam and now that it supports Islam we should support it."[66]

Abdul Bari's letter to which reference is made in the above communication repeats the same sentiments. He wrote, "You can assure him (Reading) and his Government that so long as Muhammadans continue to live they will always be grateful to him and to Mr. Montagu."[67]

Apparently Reading's manoeuvre had caused perturbation among the Muslims and compelled some of them to reconsider their attitude *vis-a-vis* the Government. The imprisonment of Gandhiji, the moving force behind the political agitation, and of Muhammad Ali, the soul of the Khilafat movement, left them leaderless and without a guide. When the Turks put an end to the Sultanate and separated the Khilafat from the State on the model of the Vatican, the Indian Muslims were completely nonplussed.

X. RESURGENCE OF COMMUNAL DISSENSIONS

It was natural that the more sentimental and fanatical among them should blame Gandhiji for their untoward predicament and begin to entertain ideas of exclusiveness and isolation from the community which in their opinion had failed them. They had participated in the movement to save the interests of Islam and in obedience to the behests of their scriptures. According to a biographer of Jinnah : "The Muslims were mainly concerned about the Khilafat question to settle which they were inclined to be even militant. To them the questions of the Swaraj were of a secondary nature."[68]

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[66] Home Department, Political, March 1922, Intelligence Report.

[67] *Ibid.*, Letter from Maulana Abdul Bari, Firangi Mahal, Lucknow, dated 15th *Rajab*, 1340 A.H.

Such feelings nurtured the seeds of doubt and discord in the minds of the Muslims.

It must, however, be admitted that the soil for dissension was prepared by the nature of the Khilafat and non-cooperation movements. They had given a deep religious colour to the struggle for independence. It is true that the motives of the supreme leader were exalted. But his conception of religion as essentially a matter of spirituality, humanity and morality was beyond the comprehension of many who followed him. For most of his followers—Hindus and Muslims, religion was a question of doctrine and ritual and blind obedience to the sacred laws as interpreted by the jurists. Thus the movement tended to accentuate the religious bias of both the Hindus and Muslims. Inevitably it tended to harden the separate moulds in which their opinions and emotions were cast. The mixture of religion and politics was bound to prove explosive as the sequel showed. Lajpat Rai, a great admirer of Gandhiji who supported the non-cooperation resolution at Nagpur in 1920, wrote in 1924 :

"Unhappily during the last decade we have created an atmosphere which smells more of orthodoxy and bigotry than of rationalism and toleration. The non-cooperation movement itself has materially contributed to the creation of this atmosphere. It was unfortunate that the Khilafat movement in India should have taken its stand on a religious rather than a political basis. There were political grounds to support it. It was still more unfortunate that Mahatma Gandhi and the leaders of the Khilafat movement should have brought religion into such prominence in connection with a movement which was really and fundamentally more political than religious. The desire to seek religious sanction for the various items of the non-cooperation programme was another great blunder. It led directly to the revival of sectarian zeal and to the re-enthroning of influences and forces which were antagonistic to the idea of a united India."[69]

An unfortunate offshoot of this intertwined mesh of religion and politics was that many intellectuals were either discouraged and turned away from the movement, for instance, Jinnah; or joined it with reservations openly expressed as in the case of Jawaharlal Nehru or with mental reservations by many others. Indulal Yajnik writes, "We had never bargained with Mr. Gandhi to join him in any semi-religious or religio-political movement. We had joined him solely with a view to following him on any path of advanced direct action to wage purely political fight with a view to securing national liberty. ...We could not share Mr. Gandhi's enthusiasm for imposing the suzerainty of the Turkish Sultan over the outlying provinces of Mesopotamia or Arabia."[70] He reports his frequent discussions on this matter with Vallabhbhai Patel who was equally perplexed.

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[68] Saiyid, M.H., *Mohammed Ali Jinnah* (Lahore, 1945), p. 280.

[69] Joshi, V.C., (ed), *Lala Lajpat Rai, Writings and Speeches*, Vol. II, pp. 181-82.

XI. PEASANT AND LABOUR TROUBLES

The non-cooperation movement under Gandhiji's lead spread among the masses. It stimulated numerous sections of the people to ventilate their grievances publicly and launch collective action for their removal.

The grievances had been accentuated by the war. Its economic consequences pressed hard upon the agrarian masses as well as the workers in industries. The heavy incidence of the rents caused general unrest among the peasantry. The rise in prices without a corresponding rise in wages weighed heavily upon the factory labourers. The insanitary conditions which caused epidemics like the influenza of 1918 added to misery and discontent.

The growth of unemployment among the educated and the demobilized soldiers, especially in the Panjab, were other causes of distress—political as well as economic. The Panjab was still writhing with pain from wounds inflicted by martial law.

The stir among the masses now came into the open. In 1920 a number of peasants marched from the interior of Partapgarh (Allahabad) to acquaint the Indian leaders of their miserable condition. They complained of "the crushing exactions of the Taluqdars, of inhuman treatment, and that their condition had become wholly intolerable. They invited the leaders to their villages and sought their protection."

Jawaharlal and some of his colleagues visited them. He stated, "We found the whole countryside afire with enthusiasm and full of a strange excitement."[71]

In fact the whole of Oudh was seething with agrarian troubles because of its tenancy system. But the districts of Partapgarh, Rae Bareli and Fyzabad were specially affected. Although the agrarian agitation had little to do with the non-cooperation movement, both drew strength from a common factor—economic distress.

The U.P. Government reported to the Government of India that in January 1921 the village mobs in Rae Bareli and Fyzabad went about looting bazars, destroying crops, plundering villages. There were clashes with the police in which a number of villagers lost their lives. Serious rioting was reported in March.

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[70] Yajnik, Indulal, *Gandhi as I Knew Him*, pp. 129-30.

[71] Nehru, Jawaharlal, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

Similar to the troubles in Uttar Pradesh there were troubles in the Panjab, Gujarat and Madras.

The Panjab was in turmoil not only because of the aftermath of the Jallianwala massacre, but also because of the activities of the emigrants from abroad and the soldiers returned from the war who were unemployed. An additional source of worry to the Government was the Akali Sikhs' agitation intended to remove the corrupt priests in occupation of the Gurdwaras and to improve their administration. They were subjected to harsh treatment, but bravely and non-violently bore the lathi charges of the police. The Congress leaders sympathised with them and ultimately the Government recognised the rightness of their cause and yielded to their demands.

Another manifestation of the prevailing malaise was the dissatisfaction of the factory workers. Their wages were low, living conditions unspeakably vile and hours of work long. Discontent amongst them was perennial. Gandhiji had to intervene in the strike of the mill-hands of Ahmedabad quite early after his return from South Africa. During the course of the non-cooperation campaign it is reckoned that 400 strikes took place all over India. In the early half of 1921 there were nearly 200 strikes, and in the second half of the year there was a slump involving a million workers.

XII. RESULTS OF NON-COOPERATION

The first unarmed revolt not only in the history of India but in all history ended actually in March 1922, but it lingered on till 1924. It certainly failed to achieve its two proclaimed objects—the restitution of the Turkish Caliphate and the attainment of Swaraj. Its third object, the rectification of the Panjab wrongs, was a minor issue. From August 1, 1920 to March 1922, it was sustained by the enthusiasm, devotion and self-sacrificing spirit of the people, who lacking in organisation, experience and discipline, were pitted against a powerful Government with almost unlimited material resources—army, police, administrative machinery, funds. It was a fight between what Gandhiji called "soul force" and "material force", or two wills—the will to freedom and the will to dominate.

Its failure to achieve Swaraj was temporary. The struggle had just begun. It had not ended. But the struggle had not been fought in vain. The gains in the words of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Report were :

(1) the general awakening of the masses to their political rights and privileges,

(2) the total loss of faith in the present system of Government,

(3) the belief that it was only through their own efforts that India could hope to be free,

(4) the faith in the Congress as the only organisation which could properly direct national effort to gain freedom, and
(5) the utter failure of repression to cow down the people.

Willingdon, the Governor of Madras, writing to the Home Member of the Government of India, said, "The non-cooperation movement, whatever may be its other achievements, has spread political ideas among the masses of the people and their placid content has been disturbed."[72]

The gain was thus twofold—moral and political:

(1) strengthening of the traits of character essential for a free society,
(2) removal of the illusion that the freedom-loving and democratic people of England intended to educate the backward Indian people in the ways of self-government, though necessarily the process had to be slow and gradual.

The psychological effects of the movement on the Indian mind were remarkable. But it also set a reaction in the mind of the British which was no less notable. It shook their self-confidence, the belief in the rightness of their imperial mission. Doubts began to assail them which compelled reflection upon the justification of British rule. Scepticism about the results of their policies—educational, cultural, economic and political—disturbed their self-complacence and equanimity. The educated class—the political leaders, Gandhiji, became objects of distrust, the lowest motives were ascribed to their actions. The future appeared dark, the consciousness that they were not wanted in India distracted the mind of the rulers.

Old members of the Civil Service began resolving not to send their sons into what was once regarded as the "heaven-born service". The steel frame did not after all seem capable of sustaining for long the loosening structure of the Raj. Secretary of State Peel wrote to Reading :

"But of course it is exceedingly difficult here to persuade young men of the best quality to enter these (Indian) services, and I feel more that this reluctance to enter the services would only increase unless we are able to make very material improvement in the position and prospects of the services. ...But evidence that is continually coming before us of the position of the services in India (mainly the Civil Service) is very serious."[73]

Retired members of the Service like Meston, ex-Governor of the United Provinces (Uttar Pradesh), stumped the British universities to persuade the young men to opt for India, by placing before them alluring pictures of bright prospects, brave opportunities for the exercise of responsibility and power and the many-hued romance of India's exotic life. But disillusionment had gone far, it was not possible to recall the days when the district officer was supreme in his own sphere and his will was law to the countryside. Edward Thompson recognised, "What the world takes for just weakness in our Government and imbecility in our film magnates and authors and book society is merely senility. We have fallen into a drowse, the drowse of old age."[74]

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[72] Home Department, Political, 418 & K.W./1922. Willingdon to Vincent, y 1, 1922.

[73] *Reading Papers* : Letter from the Secretary of State for India to the Governor ral of India, Vol. V, October 11, 1922.

The will to hold on was weakened.

It is necessary to point out that the movement led by Gandhiji was not narrowly political in its objective. Gandhiji did aim at Swaraj and the restitution of Khilafat, but for him they were not ends in themselves. Swaraj was a necessary instrument for the attainment of the ideal. Khilafat was the outer symbol of an inner conviction. What then was the ideal? The ideal was an ordering of human affairs on the basis of truth and non-violence. Truth and non-violence were two facets of the same reality which was spiritual in essence. The spiritual was the opposite of the irrational in which violence inhered. Non-violence implied love and love contradicts all inequalities based on race, creed, caste, wealth sex. A society founded on truth and non-violence can, therefore, exist only where all exploitation of man by man ceases, where labour is a universal duty, where wants are limited, and men live in small communities bound together by ties of mutual respect and affection. Gandhiji's ideal was a far-off vision. But he walked through life with his eyes fixed upon it and his feet firmly strode the path which led towards it.

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[74] Thompson, E.J., *An End of the Hour*, p. 25. Cited in Greenberger, A.J., *The British Image of India*, p. 86.

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